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A CENTURY OF PAINTERS

OF THE

ENGLISH SCHOOL.

VOL. II.

A

CENTURY OF PAINTERS

OF THE

ENGLISH SCHOOL;

WITH

CRITICAL NOTICES OF THEIR WORKS,

AND AN ACCOUNT OF THE

PROGRESS OF ART IN ENGLAND.

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BY

RICHARD REDGRAVE, R.A.
(SURVEYOR OF HER MAJESTY'S PICTURES AND INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR ART,)

AND

SAMUEL REDGRAVE.

"THERE ARE MANY WRITERS ON OUR ART WHO NOT BEING OF THE PROFESSION, AND CONSEQUENTLY NOT KNOWING WHAT CAN OR WHAT CANNOT BE DONE, HAVE BEEN VERY LIBERAL OF ABSURD PRAISES IN THEIR DESCRIPTIONS OF FAVOURITE WORKS. THEY ALWAYS FIND IN THEM WHAT THEY ARE RESOLVED TO FIND, AND PRAISE THEM FOR EXCELLENCIES WHICH CAN HARDLY EXIST TOGETHER."—*Reynolds' Fifth Discourse.*

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
SMITH, ELDER AND CO., 65, CORNHILL.
1866.

00080326

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ERRATA.

VOL. I. *page* 177, *line* 18, *for* "sixty-two" *read* "forty-two."
" " 346, " 15, " "James III." *read* "James I."
" " 405, " 31, " "Munro of Novarre" *read* "Munro of Novar."
VOL. II., " 29, " 9, " "1828" *read* "1829."
" " 134, " 8, " "just below" *read* "just above."
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A CENTURY OF PAINTERS.

CHAPTER I.

SIR THOMAS LAWRENCE, P.R.A.

Birth and Parentage—Early Teaching and winning Talents, but neglected Education—Commences Portraiture at Bath—Comes to London—Studies at the Royal Academy—Introduction to Reynolds—Elected Associate of the Academy—His early Distinction and Patronage—Manner and Quality of his Painting, and its Merits—Tries Historical Subjects—His "Satan"—Continues to improve in Portrait Art—And Increases his Practice—Steadily advances his Position—Some Interruption to his Progress by Scandal connected with the Princess of Wales—Gains the Favour and Patronage of the Prince—Commissioned to paint the Allied Sovereigns—Knighted—Goes to Aix la Chapelle to execute his Commission—Vienna and Rome—On his Return elected President of the Royal Academy—Criticism on the Works painted for the Prince—His Studio in London again filled with Sitters—His Academy Duties—Collection of Drawings—His best Portraits of this date—Short Illness and Death—Personal Recollections—His Treatment of the Costume of his Time—Opinions and Criticism upon his Art.

THOMAS LAWRENCE afterwards Sir Thomas, and the fourth president of the Royal Academy, was born at Bristol on the 4th of May, 1769. His father was the son of a clergyman, and although originally bred to the law, was at the time of his son's birth, the landlord of

the White Lion Inn in that city. His mother, who could reckon her ancestry for some generations, was also the child of a minister of the church, the Vicar of Tenbury. The marriage of the parents of the painter had been somewhat clandestine, and Mrs. Lawrence was disowned by her family on that account; she seems to have been a woman of much refinement and sweetness of disposition, and hardly fitted for the hostess of an inn. Thomas Lawrence, the father of the painter, after completing his articles in an attorney's office, had spent some of the best of his early years in rural idleness—reading the poetry of our best authors, and making some vain endeavours at compositions of his own, being his chief amusements. This taste for reading and reciting poetry he had cultivated in his early childhood. In 1772, when young Lawrence was about three years of age, the father having failed in his business in Bristol, removed to Devizes, and was aided by his friends to take the Black Bear Inn in that town. These were the days when all travelling was comparatively slow, and when all the better class travelled post; and as Devizes was on the high road to Bath, then the great centre of fashionable resort when the London season was over, the Black Bear, the principal inn, was the resting-place of most of the visitors to that city of waters.

Young Lawrence, as a child, was eminently beautiful; by his father's zealous teaching he had committed many fine passages from our poets to memory, and was able to repeat them with much taste and innate feeling; added to this he early developed a power of sketching likenesses, and would readily pencil either profile or full face of those who sat to him. The father was very proud of his child's beauty and precocity, and

would often introduce him to his guests to exhibit his talents. It is said that the innkeeper himself had some of the airs of an independent gentleman; he dressed in the height of fashion at a time when our national costume was far richer and more varied than at present, and with his full suit of black, his starched ruffles and flowing periwig, he caused the envy of brother tradesmen, and possibly also hurt the pride of some of his customers. It is added that the landlord of the Black Bear was at times somewhat intrusive to his customers, both of his own company and that of his child, yet the boy attracted the attention of many eminent persons quite competent to judge of his abilities, and these, charmed with his childish graces and beauty as well as the pretty way in which he delivered his poetry, talked of him in the fashionable coteries of Bath and the metropolis, so that many travellers wished to see the extraordinary boy, and those who did not, and who at first resented the idea of being bored with the child and his performances, were soon charmed with his youth and loveliness.

Lawrence's biographer tells us that in 1775, Mr., subsequently Lord Kenyon, arrived with his lady late in the evening at Devizes. After the fatigues of travelling—slow enough in those days—they were not in the best possible humour when the innkeeper entered their sitting-room, and proposed to show them his wonderful child; he told them his boy was only five years old and could take their likeness or repeat to them any speech in Milton's "Pandemonium." To that place the offended guests were on the eve of commending their host, when the child rushed in; and as Lady Kenyon used to relate, her vexation and anger were suddenly changed into admiration. He was

riding on a stick, and went round and round the room in the height of infantile joyousness. Mrs. Kenyon, as soon as she could get him to stand, asked the child if he could take the likeness of that gentleman, pointing to her husband. "That I can," said the little Lawrence, "and very like too." A high chair was placed on the table, pencils and paper were brought, and the infant artist soon produced an astonishingly-striking likeness. Mr. Kenyon now coaxed the child, who had got tired by the half-hour's labour, and asked him if he could take the likeness of the lady. "Yes, that I can," was his reply once more, "if she will turn her side to me, for her face is not straight"—an indication of his early sense of correct form, which produced a laugh, as it happened to be true. He accordingly took a side-likeness of Mrs. Kenyon, of which it is said, that twenty-five years afterwards the likeness could still be recognized. This drawing seems to have been nearly half life-size, and delicately shaded.

Soon after this, at the age of six, young Lawrence was sent to school at Bristol for two years, at the end of which time his father's increasing difficulties occasioned his recall. These two years were all young Lawrence was allowed to devote to his education; he not only went no more to school, but it will be found as we proceed, that he had to employ the years mostly set apart for education in making drawings and portraits. A few lessons in French, which enabled him to translate with difficulty, and the desultory instruction of his father, mostly turned towards reading and recitation, forming the only exception. The painter's education was, indeed, rather carried on by conversation with the many distinguished and cultivated persons who sat to him, or sought his society as he

advanced from childhood to early manhood. Even instruction in his art was denied him. It is said that a Devonshire baronet took such a liking to the boy that he offered to send him to Rome to study, even at the cost of a thousand pounds, but Lawrence, the father, declined, saying that "his son's talents required no cultivation." In 1779, the elder Lawrence was obliged to leave Devizes with his family; they repaired first to Oxford, where the youth, whose fame had preceded him, found many sitters. The College dignitaries, on their way to Bath, had travelled by Devizes, and many, no doubt, had witnessed the performances of the boy-painter.

From Oxford, after a short stay at Weymouth, the Lawrence family went to Bath, where the eldest brother of the painter, who was a clergyman, had obtained the lectureship of St. Michael's, and the studio of the younger quickly became the resort of the idleness and fashion of that pleasure-town. His first works were in crayons—his charges one guinea, and one guinea and a half for heads in ovals. At Bath he became acquainted with Mr. Hoare, R.A., who was eminent in this walk of art, and highly esteemed for his crayon portraits, and Lawrence acknowledges having received much advice and assistance from him. The collection of the Hon. Mr. Hamilton, of Lansdowne Hill, afforded him the means of studying—it would appear at second hand—some of the works of the Italian painters. Lawrence made crayon copies of the "Transfiguration" of Raphael, the "Aurora" of Guido, and the "Descent from the Cross" of Daniel de Volterra. For the first of these works, done in 1783, when Lawrence was only thirteen years of age, he obtained, two years later, the silver pallet of the Society of

Arts. The Council would have awarded the work their gold medal had the rules permitted, but this was not possible. To mark their sense of the merits of the work, however, they had the pallet "gilded all over," a good omen for the young painter. Meanwhile his sitters increased, as did his prices; and he was in the habit of completing three or four portraits in each week at two or three guineas each. The beautiful Duchess of Devonshire and Mrs. Siddons were among his sitters; a portrait of the latter as Aspasia in the *Grecian Daughter* was engraved, and proved highly remunerative.

The biographer of Lawrence is not very clear in the account of his progress: we are told that in 1779, "at the age of ten, our young artist burst from mere portraits to original compositions of the highest class. He now *painted*, as a subject, 'Christ reproving Peter for his Denial of him before Pilate,' 'Reuben's Application to his Father, that Benjamin might accompany him into Egypt, &c.'" yet, afterwards, he says, "It was not until 1786, when he had passed his seventeenth year that I can find any trace of his having made an attempt at oil *painting*." Probably his early works were in chalk or crayons only; but this year he spread a whole-length canvas, and painted life-size, "Our Saviour bearing his Cross." What has become of this work, we have not been able to ascertain, nor of a portrait of himself—three-quarter size—which he finished immediately afterwards. Of this latter, the painter had no mean opinion, for he writes to his mother respecting it:—"Excepting Sir Joshua, for the painting of a head, I would risk my reputation with any painter in London." In fact, the young painter had set his heart on a journey to London. The

previous year, as we have already said, he had obtained a prize from the Society of Arts; such rewards were more estimated in those days than they afterwards became. Many artists made them the object of their first struggle, and in the provinces the awards of the Adelphi Council had an added importance. The successful youth was desirous of becoming a student of the Royal Academy, of seeking an interview with Reynolds, of seeing the works and entering into rivalry with the great portrait-painter of the metropolis.

In 1787, the elder Lawrence removed with his son to London, and on the 13th of September, the young painter, then in his eighteenth year, was admitted a student of the Royal Academy. Mr. Howard, the secretary, said, "His proficiency in drawing, even at that time, was such as to leave all his competitors in the antique school far behind him. His personal attractions were as remarkable as his talent; altogether he excited a great sensation, and seemed to the admiring students as nothing less than a young Raphael suddenly dropt among them. He was very handsome, and his chestnut locks flowing on his shoulders gave him a romantic appearance." Lawrence soon after obtained his wished-for introduction to Sir Joshua Reynolds; he took with him the Bath portrait of which he had thought so well, but with all his self-confidence he trembled as he awaited the judgment of the great President. Sir Joshua was at the moment engaged with another aspirant for fame, whom he dismissed with but negative encouragement. Young Lawrence's work, however, he regarded some time, and with great attention, then turning to him said, "Stop, young man—I must have some talk with you—I suppose, now, you

think this is very fine, and this colouring very natural: hey—hey!" and then began to criticise the work and to point out its various faults. After a time he took the picture away into another room, probably to examine it more at leisure and freer from the observation of the young painter; returning, he advised Lawrence to study nature diligently rather than the old masters, and with a general but impressive invitation to visit him often, dismissed him. Lawrence, who at once took advantage of this opening to Reynolds's house, soon became a frequent visitor, and had no occasion to feel that he trespassed on the welcome given him.

Lawrence at this time had made but few painted copies from the old masters—had made little practical study of his art; and the method he had adopted was of the simplest. Reynolds, on the contrary, was continually endeavouring after a new manner,—Rembrandt to-day, Vandyke to-morrow, and then Velasquez changed places with Titian in the estimation of the president. Many pictures by the old masters were bought simply to have parts rubbed down that he might, as far as possible, examine their dead-colouring, or pry into the ground on which they were painted. In our own student's days we were intimate with a pupil and countryman of West's who had purchased one or two of these heads, and used to show the parts carefully scraped down to permit Reynolds, to whom they had belonged, to examine their secrets. This led Reynolds into his various experiments in grounds, pigments, and vehicles, from which his pictures have suffered, and from which, at the time, he knew they were suffering; for many were the complaints, even in his life, of the decay of his works. It was kind,

therefore, of the elder painter, now fast approaching the end of his own art-career, to warn the rising student of his dangers; and whether it arose from Lawrence's profiting by the advice given, or that he had neither taste nor aptitude for the like course, valuable to art though damaging to Reynolds's fame, certain it is that Lawrence at once adopted a simple method of execution, and continued the same in all his after practice. Thus his pictures remain at the present day much as he left them, and if they fall short, far, very far short, of the richness of impasto, the golden hues, and the broad simplicity of Reynolds, they have at least been spared much of the degradation from time, and more of the cruel wrongs from restoration, that befel the works of his predecessor almost as soon as he had laid down his pallet and was removed from the scene of his labours.

Mr. Shee, afterwards P.R.A., writes of Lawrence in 1789,—"He is a very genteel, handsome young man, but rather effeminate in his manner. A newspaper that puffs him here (in London) very much, says he is not yet one-and-twenty; and I am told by the students, who knew him in Bath, that he is three-and-twenty. . . . . He is wonderfully laborious in his manner of painting, and has the most uncommon patience and perseverance. As yet he has had the advantage of me in length of practice and opportunities of improvement. This is his fifth year of exhibiting in London. His price is ten guineas a head, and I hear he intends raising it. There is no young artist in London bids so fair to arrive at excellence, and I have no doubt that he will, if he is careful, soon make a fortune."

Lawrence's career as a *student* of the Royal Academy

was a very short one; the Queen and King were both interested in what they had heard of the provincial prodigy. The painter became an aspirant for higher honours than studentship, although much below the academic age. In November, 1790, being then little more than twenty-one, he came on the ballot at the election for associates, and received three votes against sixteen, with which his opponent Wheatley was successful. Peter Pindar, ever ready to attack the Academy, and here with some cause (its departure from its own laws) wrote on the occasion a scurrilous poem called "The Rights of Kings," in which he attributes two of the votes to Reynolds and West, who, he insinuates, had received an intimation from royalty that the rising wonder should be elected of the body. Pindar ironically advises contrition on the part of the sixteen "Royal Mules," and says:—

> "Go, sirs, with halters round your wretched necks,
> Which some contrition for your crimes bespeaks,
> And much-offended Majesty implore.
> Say, piteous kneeling in the Royal view,—
> 'Have pity on a sad abandoned crew,
> And we, great King, will sin no more:
> Forgive, dread sir, the crying sin,
> And Mister Lawrence shall come in.'"

It is probable that West, who owed so much to royal patronage, and most likely felt satisfied with the superior talent of the candidate, may have used his influence in Lawrence's favour, and have been one of the three voters. But Reynolds had had little of court patronage beyond his barren office of "Painter in Ordinary," and few inducements to act otherwise than conscientiously, and in the interest of art. Moreover, he could not have given a vote in this instance, the president only having a *casting* vote in case of an equal ballot. However this

may be, at the election of the ensuing year, 1791, Lawrence was successful in obtaining his associateship. Honours came thick upon him. Sir Joshua died in February, 1792, and ere the month was out the King had directed that Lawrence, then not twenty-three years of age, and not yet a full member of the Academy, should be appointed his successor as painter in ordinary. The Dilettante Society also, setting aside one of its important rules in his favour, elected him a member of their body, and their painter at the same time. Never, perhaps, in this country, had a man so young, so uneducated, and so untried in his art, advanced as it were *per saltum* to the honours and emoluments of the profession.

In February 1794, Lawrence, then nearly twenty-five years of age, was admitted to the full honours of the academic body. Sir Joshua's death, and Lawrence's appointment as his successor to the Paintership in Ordinary, speedily opened to him enlarged and successful practice. How rapidly he obtained employment in the metropolis is shown by a reference to the early catalogues of the Academy. He had not ventured to exhibit there before 1787, in which year there were seven pictures by him on the walls; following out his career until 1793, when he sent six pictures, we find he had up to this period exhibited sixty-five works, with but one or two exceptions, portraits, including those of the King, the Queen, the royal children, and many of the most distinguished personages of the age; a pretty good catalogue of seven years' labours. But henceforth, instead of second, Lawrence was to take the first rank in his profession, and to have a great influence on the school to which he belonged. The modes of execution adopted by Reynolds,

Gainsborough, and Romney, were to give place to one less painter-like in quality, of less richness and impasto, more facile, and wherein drawing was placed before painting, and purity more esteemed than tone. Lawrence began with some slight attempts to follow in the footsteps of Reynolds. The head presented to the Academy on his election has a meretricious appearance from glazing and forced colouring, and shows that the attempt was ill judged, and not in harmony with his powers. After Reynolds and Gainsborough, Lawrence looks pretty and painty; there is none of that power of uniting the figure with the ground—that melting of the flesh into the surrounding light which is seen in the pictures of the first president—Lawrence's work seems more on the surface—indeed only surface—while his flesh-tints have none of the natural purity of those by his two predecessors; we think them pretty in Lawrence, but we forget paint and painting in looking at a face by Reynolds or Gainsborough. The picture of the children of Mr. J. B. Calmady is a good instance of this, and also of how vastly superior, in painting children, Sir Joshua was to his successor, who had no apparent admission into the inner heart of childhood. His inferiority in this respect—and how much his children depended on mere prettiness and fashion for their charm—will be felt on looking at such pictures as "Lady Grey and Child," or "The Daughter of Lady Augusta Murray," or "Young Lambton."

Lawrence's heads are well drawn, and at times passably well modelled; but the flesh is flesh-colour and not flesh, having the appearance of being painted on a hard ground, such as china, and a thin and somewhat starved

appearance as compared with the works of his predecessors. Thus, when hanging near to one another in the International Exhibition in 1852, even Ramsay's "Duke of Argyle" made Lawrence's portrait of "Cardinal Gonsalvi" —certainly one of his best works—look poor and washed-out. This poverty and thinness was less seen in his early works than afterwards, when the pressure upon him for portraits became great, and he was obliged to use the most facile means of rapid completion.

The portrait of Lady Cremorne, now in the possession of Mr. Granville Penn, a whole-length painted shortly after Lawrence's arrival in London, which was exhibited in the British Institution in 1864, is an excellent specimen of his art at that period, and we cannot but feel that if he had continued to paint such pictures he would have enjoyed a far higher reputation than can now be accorded to him. It appears to be a faithful, and is certainly a characteristic likeness; much more powerful in contrast than are his latter works, and of a far richer tone. The flesh and white drapery are clear and sparkling, without that look of being lately washed which is peculiar to the flesh of his later portraits. Lady Cremorne is dressed in black, with the enormous mob-cap of white cambric (trimmed with black ribbons) characteristic of the period, and assisting to increase the principal light. The action is most simple; there is no affectation of making the portrait more beautiful than the original, and the robes are exceedingly well introduced behind the figure as part of the back-ground. For this work we are told that he received only forty guineas. When fashion and beauty flocked to his doors and begged to be painted at prices increased twenty-fold, it is no

wonder that he was obliged to use every artifice to lighten his labours.

We are aware that his contemporaries had a far higher opinion of Lawrence's powers than we have expressed. Fuseli said, "The portraits of Lawrence are as well if not better drawn, and the women in a finer taste than the *best* of Vandyke's: and he is so far above the competition of any painter in this way in Europe, that he should put over his study, to deter others who practise the art from entering, the well-known line—You who enter here leave hope behind." We have, however, spoken upon our own convictions, not hastily formed.

In the year 1793, Lawrence made an attempt at poetic art; he painted and exhibited a picture from the *Tempest*,—"Prospero raising the Storm." What were its merits we are unable now to ascertain, as the picture is destroyed, and no reminiscences of it remain. We should not have adverted to it but as one of his historic failures, had not a story been published concerning the picture which is not borne out by facts. A writer in the *Fine Arts Magazine*, in 1831, tells the following anecdote, which he says, "Though well known at the time, has not been lately repeated. Fuseli had made a rough sketch of 'Prospero and Miranda' in the *Tempest*, which had been neglected in his study. A short time before the opening of the Exhibition a friend called upon him, and enumerating the works preparing for the Academy, mentioned a 'Prospero and Miranda' by Lawrence. Fuseli pricked up his ears at this, and quietly asked what sort of a design it was. The visitor described it generally, and there the subject dropped. Fuseli hastily finished his design, and, without mentioning it to any

one, sent it in as a sketch for a large picture, *and it was hung in the same room* with Lawrence's picture. The striking similarity of the two designs attracted general notice, and this, we believe, was the last poetical composition that Lawrence attempted. Over it, on the same canvas, soon after the close of the Exhibition, he painted Kemble as 'Rolla.'" The fact that he obliterated the picture by painting the "Rolla" over it is confirmed by Lawrence's biographer, but all the other facts give way upon examination. Fuseli must have painted his "Prospero and Miranda" much earlier, as it was exhibited in the Shakspeare Gallery in 1791. Moreover, in 1793, Fuseli only exhibited two works: one a sketch from *Macbeth*, "The Disappearance of the Witches' Cauldron," No. 110; the other, "Amoret and Britomart," No. 177. While in the four following years, 1794–7, he did not exhibit with the Royal Academy at all, being occupied, no doubt, with his own unsuccessful adventure—the Milton Gallery. Lawrence may have been disappointed at the cold reception his picture received, and it may have had some resemblance to the well-known picture —for it must have been well known by that time—of Fuseli. But the simultaneous exhibition and the cunning expedient by which Fuseli is said to have claimed his own idea, quite falls to the ground.

Walter Scott writing to Wilkie at the time of Lawrence's death, says of him, "I used to think it a great pity that he never painted historical subjects;" and then goes on to remark that, like Sir Joshua, Lawrence often approached the confines of history in his portraits. How far this latter is the case may be estimated by those who remember his "Cato" (1812), or "Coriolanus" (1798); or

will take the trouble to look at his "Hamlet" (1801), in the National Gallery, and to compare either with Reynolds's "Mrs. Siddons as the Tragic Muse," at Dulwich. But his powers as an historical painter may be judged of by the "Satan calling up his Legions," which was exhibited in 1797, and after being for some years in the possession of the Duke of Norfolk, is at present the property of the Academy. Satan is lanky and ill drawn; the action of the figure is stagey, the disposition of the limbs all abroad, and the colour of the flesh tough and leather-like. There is a great want of style in the drawing of the figure, which seems to be a mixture between the living model and the Apollo. It is a large canvas covered with a subject which the artist has failed to make interesting.

Nevertheless, Lawrence himself, from some passages in his letters, thought he had achieved success. He says, apparently in allusion to his "Satan," "I have gained fame, not more than my wishes, but more than my expectations. . . . . The work I have undertaken has answered my secret motive in beginning it. My success in portraits will no longer be thought accident and fortune; and if I have trod the second path with honour, it is because my limbs are strong to reach the higher walks." And again, writing to Mrs. Boucherette, he says, "I am very glad you like my 'Hamlet,' which, except my 'Satan,' I think my best work." Many of his brother artists praised the work highly,—and some of his contemporary critics. The writer of "The Touchstone to the present Exhibition, by Anthony Touchstone" (1797), amongst other complimentary criticism, says, "This picture is not much

inferior to the best conceptions of the divine Buonarotti, and the extravagant Goltzius (a strange combination!). The figure of Satan is colossal, and drawn with excellent skill and judgment. Before we entered the room we confess we felt, for a moment, a secret wish that it had come from the pencil of Fuseli; but the instant we saw it, and the more we looked on it, the more was the eye of criticism filled with satisfaction. We esteemed it as a wonderful production of the human mind, and equal to anything of the kind produced in modern days. Satan is ably and nobly conceived, and conveys to the imagination every due idea of fallen majesty and terrific power." Another critic says: "The figure of Satan, after recent defeat and ineffable disgrace, has all the ferocious energy and violent dignity of his character . . . . He appears no less than angel fallen."

Knowles, in his life of Fuseli, speaks of it as "the splendid picture which for a long period was a prominent feature in the collection of the Duke of Norfolk, and which by the style of drawing as well as its tone of colour abundantly proves that this artist would have been equally distinguished for his powers in treating epic subjects as in portraits, if he had employed his pencil exclusively thereon." But this is said rather as an apology for Fuseli's having declined the offer of a place in the Milton Gallery to this great work. And we know that, on another occasion, Fuseli described the Satan "as a d——d thing, certainly, but not the devil." On the other side, Pasquin was more than ordinarily bitter and scurrilous when he said, "This picture is a mélange made up of the *worst* parts of the divine Buonarotti and the extravagant Goltzius;" and here the conjunction of

the two names is at least intelligible. He adds—"The figure of Satan is colossal and very ill drawn; the body is so disproportioned to the extremities that it appears all legs and arms, and might at a distance be mistaken for a sign of the spread eagle. The colouring has as little analogy to truth as the contour, for it is so ordered that it conveys the idea of a mad German sugar-baker dancing naked in the conflagration of his own treacle; but the liberties taken with his infernal majesty are so numerous, so various, and so insulting that we are amazed that the ecclesiastic orders do not interfere in behalf of their old friend." Such was the character of contemporary criticism, displaying, as it too often does, far more partisanship than desire to promote the best interests of art and artists. Time, however, has enabled us to arrive at a just estimate of Lawrence's powers, and few would now think otherwise than that he chose wisely when he became a portrait painter; or would be of opinion that the world was greatly a loser by his neglect of epic art. Mr. John Bernard, in his "Retrospections of the Stage," tells us that the boy Lawrence had a great desire to recite "Satan's Address to the Sun," which, however, his father had interdicted. Once when in company he was urged to give it, but on opening the forbidden page a slip of paper dropped out; this was picked up by one of the company and read aloud,—"Tom, mind you don't touch Satan." It would have been well, perhaps, when he spread his canvas for his great work, that he had remembered his father's inhibition:—"Mind you don't touch Satan."

Lawrence's practice continued to increase, and he steadily advanced beyond his numerous competitors.

Hoppner alone, sustained by his appointment as painter to the Prince of Wales—a prince who, at that time, led the fashion in matters of taste, was able to rival Lawrence in the extent of his practice and the beauty and fashion of his sitters. From time to time, as already noticed, Lawrence painted what he calls "half history," but which we should call costume portraits; such as his Kemble in Coriolanus, and the same great actor as Hamlet. Kemble had often sat to our artist, which made Pasquin say, "Another representation of Kemble the actor, of whose visage we have so many copies, that we are led to think that half his time is wasted in sitting for his multifarious portraits." Perhaps the costume portraits painted from the actor may have led Lawrence into theatrical action and forced expression from studying the character on the stage as well as in the studio.

Even if it were our province to enter minutely into the lives of the artists who come under notice in this work, there would be little of incident in that of Lawrence. A yearly catalogue of his sitters affords us almost the only subject for comment; an occasional notice of more or less successful works—of some portrait of a distinguished sitter, or a noted beauty,—is all that can be told of most portrait painters. As to Lawrence this is more particularly the case, since his style once adopted, he changed but little—he tried no experiments in pigments—he sought no new methods of execution. He did not travel abroad to examine the pictures of other masters, or to study art for his improvement. Having obtained a good position in the profession, and plenty of occupation for his pencil, his life henceforth had some-

what of routine in the fulfilment of his various engagements. The death of Reynolds, followed in a few years by the retirement of Romney, left a great opening to him, yet he had at first many competitors. Opie was in full practice till his death in 1807; though his coarse strength of manner in a degree unfitted him for the first rank in female portraiture, yet in his male portraits he held his own against the future president. Hoppner lived until 1810, patronized by all who loved the school of Reynolds and worshipped the rising sun. While as to court patronage, even the King, who had hastened to grace Lawrence with the office of Sergeant Painter, left vacant by Reynolds, sat to Beechey for those portraits which seemed to belong almost of right to the Painter in Ordinary.

In 1801 an incident occurred which is here alluded to as having had an indirect influence on Lawrence's practice. He was required to attend at Blackheath to paint a portrait of the unfortunate Princess of Wales and her daughter, and in order that he might lose no time in journeys to and fro, he asked permission during the progress of his work to sleep at Montague House, a convenience that, on a like occasion, had been accorded to Beechey. His agreeable manner, pleasant conversation, and fine taste in reading poetry, together with his intimacy with the Angersteins and other families in the neighbourhood who visited her Royal Highness, introduced him occasionally to a seat at the dinner-table, —and on one or two occasions when the Princess was alone with her ladies, he was admitted to read aloud to her, and even to amuse her at the chess-table. The painter, it must be remembered, was young and hand-

some, as well as talented and agreeable, and the circumstance was seized upon as a source of scandal, which was inquired into by the commissioners who sat in 1806 on what is called "The Delicate Investigation." Though the commissioners, in their report to his Majesty George III., attach to the Princess a levity of conduct with Captain Manby, they make no such allusion to Lawrence; yet it would appear that for some time his female sitters, those whom his art most suited, fell off. Thus in the next seven years, we find the proportion of male portraits to females was twenty-four to seven: after 1810 this feeling passed away, and in 1815, the Prince Regent, who had hitherto avoided Lawrence's studio, sat to him, and, pleased with his agreeable manners, as well as the art which Lawrence certainly possessed of making his sitters ladies and gentlemen—at once gave him full employment in Court orders.

In 1814, as soon as the Continent was open to travellers, Lawrence hastened to Paris to see the wonderful collection in the Louvre, before it was dispersed. Writing to his friend, Miss Crofts, he says:—"Had I delayed my journey one day longer, I should have lost the view of some of the finest works of this gallery, the noblest assemblage of the efforts of human genius that was ever presented to the world." His stay, however, on this occasion, was but a short one; he was recalled home by order of the Prince Regent on important business. The Prince was desirous that the kingly personages, the statesmen, and military officers who had aided in the restoration of the Bourbon dynasty should sit for their portraits, to form a commemorative gallery—and that the opportunity of their expected visit to London

should be taken advantage of for this purpose. Such a commission was highly honourable to Lawrence; it raised him to the summit of his fortunes, and if satisfactorily accomplished, was likely to give him a European reputation. His whole time on his return was taken up in watching for the short irregular sittings which he could obtain, during the intervals of leisure from feast and festival, from the Emperor of Russia, the King of Prussia, Prince Blucher, and the Hetman of the Cossacks: but the length of their visit did not admit of the scheme being fully carried out on this occasion, and shortly afterwards the country was again plunged into war by the flight of Napoleon from Elba.

In the April of 1815, the Regent, pleased with the present success, conferred on Lawrence the honour of knighthood. The Prince had now fully accepted Lawrence as the Court painter, and although some time intervened before the full execution of his project, it was not forgotten, but simply postponed to a more fitting opportunity. Meanwhile, the most distinguished persons of the time, the court beauties, and the military officers who had taken part in the crowning victory of Waterloo, sat to the painter—among them the Duke of Wellington, in the dress he wore and on the horse he rode, on that great day,—almost the only equestrian portrait by Lawrence's hand. Honours flowed in upon him. Foreign academies sent him diplomas of membership, America vieing with Florence, Vienna, and Rome, while the French King, Charles XII., made him a Chevalier of the Legion of Honour, and our own King relaxed the iron law as respects civilians to whom this honour has been given, and allowed the painter to wear it.

The stay of the allied sovereigns in London in 1815 had been far too short to enable the Regent to carry out his favourite scheme. He felt that the one great act of his government was the pacification of Europe, and the settlement of its divisions after the great war; and he would not allow his intention of collecting the portraits of those great warriors and able statesmen who had co-operated in bringing about the event, to be frustrated. In 1818, the allied sovereigns, their ministers and councillors, assembled at Aix la Chapelle, to lay out the new map of Europe, and it was thought a fitting opportunity for obtaining sittings from the principal actors, in their intervals of leisure from the active duties of congress. In selecting Lawrence for this honourable mission, besides the influence of his suave and gentlemanly manners, it was felt that the best of living portrait painters would be employed to do justice to the theme. The terms were not especially liberal, but the fame and honour to be achieved were great. Lawrence was to be paid 1,000*l.* for travelling expenses and loss of time, and his usual terms for the several portraits. He seems, from a letter to his old friend Mr. Angerstein, to have named these terms for himself, and to have felt that the honourable distinction of the commission was far more to him than any direct profit. The Government desired to give him every aid towards the accomplishment of his task. A portable wooden house was prepared for him, consisting of a painting-room, 50 by 18 feet; an anteroom, 20 by 18 feet; and a vestibule, 12 by 18 feet; which it was intended, on its arrival at Aix la Chapelle, to erect in the grounds of Lord Castlereagh's Hotel. But by some mismanagement, this temporary erection

did not arrive in time to be useful. The magistrates of the city, however, fitted up for him the large gallery of the Hôtel de Ville, a painting-room which he found very suitable and convenient for his purpose. In this room, Lawrence had as sitters the great arbiters of the fate of kingdoms, and received from them such courtesies as the great masters received from the kings and princes they served. He tells us how the Emperor of Russia condescended to put the pegs into his easel, and to help him to lift his portrait on to them, and compares it with the well-known incident of Charles V.'s stooping to take up Titian's pencil for him. But more substantial honours were the presents of snuff-boxes and diamond rings, and the many orders for copies of his portraits from princes and ministers, insomuch that it was said at the time that his year's labours were worth to him more than 20,000*l.*

While at Aix la Chapelle, the Prince Regent sent his further commands to Lawrence to proceed to Rome to paint for him the Cardinal Gonsalvi and the Pope. Lawrence would have wished to defer this visit to another year, but the Prince was anxious for the full accomplishment of his scheme, and the painter could but obey. From Aix la Chapelle he travelled to Vienna, to paint another portrait of the Emperor Francis and Prince Schwartzenberg. His journey from the borders of the Rhine to Vienna was a very different affair to what it is in the present day. He tells us that during eight nights on the road he only slept one out of his carriage. In Vienna new honours and new labours awaited him, and although, as we learn from his letters, the fine paintings he had seen on the Continent had somewhat lowered his self-

esteem, the flattering manner in which he was received, and the admiration expressed for his works, were sufficient to elate any man. He reached Vienna early in January, 1819. Notwithstanding excessive labour, he found it impossible to leave before the 10th May. In the interval he had painted four whole-lengths, three half-lengths, and eight three-quarter portraits, besides making twelve chalk drawings. The faces of the paintings were entirely finished, and part of the figures; every figure being accurately drawn in. No wonder that he was worn out with such continued excitement and exertion, and wrote to his niece:—"My mind and spirits are at times so relaxed and worn when professional exertion is over, as to make the act of taking up this little implement (the pen) a hopeless exertion."

When he left Vienna, his journey towards Rome was very rapid. He again slept in his carriage throughout the route, only staying for a few hours at Bologna to renew his acquaintance at the fountain-head with the masters of a school then far more popular in England than at present. On his arrival at Rome he was received with every mark of attention, and lodged in apartments in the Quirinal. He was much pleased with the subjects for his pencil:—the Pope, a gentle and amiable ecclesiastic, with an air of great benevolence; the Cardinal, with a physiognomy full of sagacity and energy. Both were very desirous of giving Lawrence every assistance; and what with his pleasure in the subjects, and his desire to uphold his fame among his countrymen and others at this seat of art, he produced two of the best portraits of the series which was the object of his journey. During his stay he found time to visit the great frescoes of the

Vatican, and declares himself deeply impressed with the great superiority of Michael Angelo over his contemporaries. Comparing him with Raphael, he says:—"The diffusion of truth and elegance, and often grandeur, cannot support itself against the compression of the sublime. There is something in that lofty abstraction, in those deities of intellect that people the Sistine Chapel, that converts the noblest personages of Raphael's drama into the audience of Michael Angelo, before whom you know that, equally with yourself, they would stand silent and awe-struck." But it is difficult to perceive that either wrought the slightest change in Lawrence's style or manner.

Before leaving Italy he paid a short visit to Naples, and in the middle of December turned his face homeward. Visiting in his way Florence, Parma, Cremona, Mantua and Venice, he arrived in London on the 30th of March, 1820. He found that many changes had taken place during his absence. The Regent was now King; and West, the President of the Academy, having died on the 10th of the month, the election for the new president took place on the very evening of Lawrence's return. By an almost unanimous vote he was chosen West's successor, and the King, delighted with the manner in which his commission was fulfilled, presented the new President with a medal and chain of gold, inscribed, "From his Majesty, George IV., to the President of the Royal Academy."

Lawrence left England on the 29th of September, 1818, and, as we have just seen, returned to London on the 30th March, 1820; so that he was absent exactly a year and a half. We are unable to ascertain the precise

amount of work he completed in the time; for if we knew the number of portraits, the state of completion to which he carried them on the spot is uncertain. As to those executed in Vienna, a statement has just been made, and we know from his letters, that some of his portraits were so far completed that he carried them with him to Rome as specimens of his powers, whilst others were finished and left with those for whom they were painted. We know also that these portraits were executed under circumstances that must have occasioned a great strain upon his powers, and that, compared with the time he exacted and the opportunities given him by visitors to his studio at home, the sittings given him for his foreign portraits were much less numerous and lengthy.

He says that the Emperor of Austria sat seven times, the Emperor of Russia seven times, the King of Prussia six times, each sitting averaging about two hours. The Pope, we are informed, sat to him nine times; but even this is far below the time he usually required, especially if we remember that he completed the hands as well as the heads from his foreign sitters. It is no wonder, therefore, that, contemplating the portraits collected together in the Waterloo Gallery at Windsor, these works look somewhat starved and poor, having a tendency to decorative art rather than to take rank with portraits by the great masters, or with those of his predecessor Reynolds. Whatever there was of meretriciousness in his art is here more particularly visible, and although Cardinal Gonsalvi and the Pope are usually spoken of as Lawrence's best works, we do not feel them comparable to such of his male portraits as he was able to carry to full completion in the quiet of his own studio—for instance,

Lord Liverpool, or more especially his fine portrait of Lord Eldon.

On his return, Lawrence's studio was soon thronged as before, and what with constant engagements to sitters, his new duties at the Academy, and his endeavours to increase his collection of drawings from the old masters, which had of late become quite a passion with him, his time was more than fully occupied. On the 10th of December, 1820, Lawrence for the first time presented the medals to the successful students of the Royal Academy; when it is usual for the president to address a short discourse to the assembled schools: it was on such occasions that the celebrated Discourses of Reynolds were delivered. This by Lawrence was, we believe, not published; but his biographer relates to us that the president wore a full-dress court suit—an evidence of his attention to the effect of personal impressions which is very characteristic: but this ceremony has of late years quite fallen into desuetude.

In the year 1823, Lawrence took a deep interest in the purchase, for the nation, of the pictures belonging to his late friend, Mr. Angerstein; and the arts certainly owe him a debt of gratitude for his earnestness and effective aid in this national object. During the succeeding years, his life and his art quietly progressed. Working more at his leisure, and giving more time to finish his works, they were more conscientiously painted. Some of his best portraits are of this date. Such are the "Children of Mr. C. B. Calmady" and "Sir William Curtis," 1824; "Young Lambton," 1825; "Miss Croker" and "Mrs. Peel," 1827; "Countess Gower and Child," "Lady Georgiana Agar Ellis" and "Lord Eldon," 1828;

the lovely Duchess of Richmond and Lady Salisbury, in 1829. His biographer opens the history of this year with these words:—"It would be difficult to conceive a man more completely happy or at least possessed of all the means and appliances of happiness than Sir Thomas Lawrence at the commencement of the year 1829." Certainly there was no appearance of decay in his powers. He himself says in a letter just after the opening of the Exhibition in 1828, "Perhaps one or two whole-lengths of the Duchess of Richmond and Marchioness of Salisbury, are the best I have painted;" and in this, the period of our student life, we well recollect the delight with which the young artists of that day, and the public who were visitors to the Exhibition, hailed the works we have enumerated. On the 10th of December, the anniversary of the foundation of the Academy, Lawrence was as usual in the chair, distributing the prizes, and delivering a short discourse. He most probably dined with the changing council on the last day of the old year, and, except that he had complained of being overworked, there was no reason to think that the end of his career was at hand.

In fact, Lawrence had begun to feel that a man of sixty cannot continue the active exertion that did not over-tax him at forty. He longed for rest, but had no leisure to take it. The time was come when, in spirit at least, the painter could ask with the poet—

> "While all things else have rest from weariness—
> All things have rest; why should we toil alone,
> We only toil, who are the first of things, . . .
> Nor hearken what the inner spirit sings?
> 'There is no joy but calm.'
> Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of things?"

He had been intending to eat his Christmas dinner with his sister Ann. On the 17th of December he writes,—"I am grieved to the soul that urgent circumstances keep me at this time from seeing you; but in the next month I will certainly break away from all engagements to be with you;" on the 19th he again writes, "Be assured, dear love, dearest sister, that nothing shall detain me from you on the day, and for the days you mention;" the day after Christmas-day he reiterates his pledge. "On the sixth I have sacredly pledged myself to be with you." He was making great exertions to finish the portrait of Canning, his engagements were pressing; yet while continually sympathizing with the distressing illness of his sister, which called forth all his tenderness, he seemed quite unaware that an illness of a more alarming character was hanging over himself. Though unwell, he dined with Sir Robert Peel on the 2nd of January, and the next morning was well enough to invite two or three of his most intimate friends to dine, spending with them one of his usual social evenings. He was busied during the following day or two in painting on the portrait of his Majesty, but on the 6th he was obliged to have recourse to Dr. Holland; yet he again painted during the day for more than an hour on the King's portrait. He found it necessary, however, to write to his sister Ann—the last note from his hand—and even then he only proposed delaying his visit till the morrow: that morrow which was but to precede his last. "I meant, my dearest Ann," he writes, "to be with you at dinner time to-morrow, and have made exertions to do so, but it may not be! You must be content to see me at a late simple dinner on Friday." That evening he

was taken much worse, and Dr. Holland being sent for, bled him; he seemed to rally a little next morning, but as the bleeding was renewed by accident on two separate occasions during the day, he sank rapidly from exhaustion, and died rather suddenly in the arms of his servant, on the evening of Thursday, the 7th of January, 1830.

Lawrence, beautiful in infancy and in boyhood, was, as a man, of handsome presence and elegant manners, to which Nature had added a well-toned and persuasive voice; these natural advantages are said to have told much in his favour with the great personages who sat to him at Aix la Chapelle, as no doubt they did in the fortunes of his life. He was very tender in speaking or writing to women. One of his lady apologists says, "It cannot be too strongly stated that his manner was likely to mislead without his intending it; he could not write a common answer to a dinner invitation, without its assuming the tone of a billet-doux. The very commonest conversation was held in that soft low whisper, and with that tone of deference and interest which are so unusual and so calculated to please." A very dangerous manner from a man with a handsome person, prominent position, and yet unmarried—a manner which led each woman to think that he regarded her with peculiar interest. He certainly loved female society, yet, though on one or two occasions he was too particular in his attentions, and had even entered into engagements, he still lived and died a bachelor.

His habit of reciting, and pleasure in it, continued through life. The gold medal subject for 1827 was from Milton—"The Expulsion of Adām and Eve." On this occasion none of the candidates were successful; and we

well remember, on the evening of distributing the other medals, the rounded melody in which the President commented on the failure, and pointed out that the candidates, while reading the lines which describe how

> "In either hand the hastening angel caught
> Our lingering parents, and to the Eastern gate
> Led them direct,"

had one and all forgotten the fine background which the poet has imagined when

> "They, looking back, all the Eastern side beheld
> Of Paradise, so late their happy seat,
> Waved over by that flaming brand; the gate
> With dreadful faces thronged and fiery arms."

Lawrence was during all his life in difficulties as to money, although, latterly at least, in the receipt of large sums from his profession. His prices, after 1820, were as follows:—head, or three-quarter size, 210*l.*; kit-cat, 315*l.*; half-length, 420*l.*; Bishop's half-length, 525*l.*; full length, 630*l.* Lord Gower paid him for his portrait of "Lady Gower and Child," 1,500 guineas. Lord Durham, for "Master Lambton," 600 guineas; yet we find him writing for payment in some instances before the portraits were completed. This improvidence has been much commented upon, and a charge of gambling entered against him, but we think without foundation. A portion, at least, of his family were for years dependent upon him, and his only extravagance seems to have been in works of art: it was too-well known that a fine drawing by the old masters was a temptation too strong to be resisted, if money could be had at whatever disadvantage. His collection of drawings, which sold for 20,000*l.* after his death, is said to have cost him 60,000*l.*—a large sum

to set aside from his income, even if he had no other difficulties to contend with.

All portrait painters are under the necessity of succumbing to the imperious dictates of fashion; not always the fashion of the dress of the period—perhaps only the fashion of its portraiture, as in the god and goddess school, or the Roman toga period of French art, a costume which we cannot suppose to have been the habit of the time. Thus also Lely and Kneller materially modified the sack and bodice of their day into the loose and *dégagé* drapery in which the lovely court shepherdesses exposed those beauties which pastoral innocence would have taught them to hide. Reynolds and Gainsborough, too, had a most difficult phase of fashion to deal with in the mountains of pomade and powder, of ribands and feathers, which the "artists in hair" of their days built on the heads of their submissive patients—structures of such consummate artifice, that, once erected, they were left as a seven days' wonder before being pulled down and re-edified. Even against these monstrosities of fashion the genius of our two great painters prevailed, and we look with admiration on the loveliness that such a sacrifice to fashion could not destroy.

Lawrence was not exempt from the general bondage which had trammelled his predecessors, but by the time he had attained the first rank in portraiture, the fashion that had hidden the golden hair and grizzled the flowing locks of his lovely countrywomen had passed away, and, if still imperious in its sway, clothing their limbs in garments so tight as to impede motion, and altering the graceful proportion and flowing lines of the female form by waists under the arm-pits rather than where nature

placed them, it at least left the complexion free from paint and patches, and the amber locks and golden ringlets from the paste that stiffened them or the powder that changed them into the ashy hue of age. But while we acknowledge the simpler taste introduced with the present century, and praise the fashion as more akin to nature, it is certain there is less of courtly dignity in the works of Lawrence than in those of his predecessors. Under the altered fashion of his day we look back on the beauties of the last century almost as we do to the quaintness of mediæval times, and are apt to think Nature, with her unrestrained ringlets, her mottled flesh and simple drapery, somewhat commonplace beside the pompous barbarisms which added many cubits to the stature of the beauty of the previous age.

In making up his pictures, Lawrence was far inferior to his predecessors. There is far less variety in his compositions, far less of art in his arrangements. We miss the happy, rich suggestions of landscape scenery that their works exhibit, and too often instead are treated to repetitions over and over again, with slight re-adjustments of the stale commonplaces of pillar and curtain, or vase and pedestal, which it may be hoped will be banished from true art, since they now form the stock properties of the *carte de visite* and the photographic studio. It has always been said that the portraits of Sir Joshua were not likenesses, yet to us they have a great appearance of individuality. Sir Thomas was subjected to the same remark both from his sitters and from his brother artists. Wilkie says that "with all the latitude allowed to Lawrence in rendering a likeness, still those who knew and could com-

pare the heads he painted with the originals must have been struck with the liberties he would take in changing and refining the features before him. He adds that, "compared with Reynolds, Lawrence was confined and limited in the arrangement of his pictures far more than his powers justified, admitting but small deviations in the placing of the heads, small variety of pictorial composition. The features in nearly all his heads were painted in the same light and in the same position; but they derived from this a perfection of execution never to be equalled." Such was the opinion of Wilkie: *we* should rather have said, a *dexterity* of execution which was quite his own.

Haydon said that "Lawrence was suited to the age, and the age to Lawrence. He flattered its vanities, pampered its weakness, and met its meretricious tastes. His men were all gentlemen with an air of fashion, and the dandyism of high life—his women were delicate but not modest—beautiful but not natural, they appear to look that they may be looked at, and to languish for the sake of sympathy." Opie had made a similar remark, but far more tersely. Lawrence, said he, "made coxcombs of his sitters, and his sitters made a coxcomb of Lawrence." These are hard sayings, and were remembered when death closed the fashionable career of the painter. As much as he had risen above his true rank in art he then fell below it, and it has taken a quarter of a century to reinstate him—not to the place which he held in his lifetime, but to the true place which as a painter he should occupy among his countrymen. It must be allowed that many of his faults arose from his courteous weakness to his sitters; they lived and moved

in the atmosphere of fashionable life, then far more exclusive than at present, and he submitted to their dictation; hence it was said that "his women look the slaves of fashion, glittering with pearls and ornaments, his children the heirs of coronets and titles, the tools and the pupils of the dancing master." Something also must be attributed to his overtaxed powers, which obliged him to give over much of the making-up of his pictures to his assistants; backgrounds and even hands were entrusted to them, and the numerous repetitions of public portraits which were called for, were necessarily the almost entire work of the Simpsons, father and son, Pegler, and others, who were in Lawrence's constant employment. The repetition of Reynolds's portrait of the Duchess of Devonshire and child—attributed to Lawrence, and now in the corridor at Windsor—is said to have been the work of Etty, during the time he was with Lawrence in Bedford Square.

Yet, with every allowance, we can hardly place Lawrence in the first rank as a painter. There remained a sense of the crayon draughtsman to the last, a tinty mode of colouring, assimilating in some degree to the false brilliancy of paste. Even his drawings, though delicate and refined in line, were somewhat effeminate, and showed little of the force of true genius: they never rose beyond the elegant insipidity of artificial life. As a painter there can be no doubt that he helped to introduce that chalky brilliancy into our school which struck Wilkie so forcibly on his return from the Continent. Lawrence had adopted a system depending on contrasts rather than on harmonies, and the meretricious qualities of his art in this respect certainly left a bad influence,

somewhat qualified by the greater attention to precision and drawing which his manner of commencing his pictures initiated. Wilkie, in his remarks on portrait painting, gives us an insight into Lawrence's practice of the art, he says :—"He wished to seize the expression rather than to copy the features. His attainment of likeness was most laborious. One distinguished person, who favoured him with forty sittings for his head alone, declared he was the slowest painter he ever sat to, and he had sat to many. He would draw the portrait in chalk, the size of life, on paper; this occupied but one sitting, but that sitting lasted nearly one whole day. He next transferred this outline from the paper to the canvas: his picture and his sitter were placed at a distance from the point of view where to see both at a time. He had to traverse all across the room before the conception which the view of his sitter suggested could be proceeded with. In this incessant transit his feet had worn a path through the carpet to the floor, exercising freedom both of body and mind; each traverse allowing time for invention, while it required an effort of memory between the touch on the canvas and the observation from which it grew."

Thus we see that the happy facility with which, as a boy, he had been able to seize the likeness of individuals had left him; or his knowledge of the difficulties, and sense of the perfection of art, had induced in him patient effort and continuous repetition. This practice, in important pictures, was carried even into the accessories and subordinate parts. It used to be told that for the legs alone of the small portrait of George IV. seated on a sofa, the king gave Lawrence nearly twenty sittings;

but then his Majesty is said to have had very fine legs, and the painter, in his Majesty's opinion, did not do them justice.

Nevertheless, Lawrence had many facile methods of giving the appearance of labour where the work was really slight; thus the texture of his furs was rendered by a dexterous handling of the scrubby hog tool, which often produced the sense of imitation more exactly than the most laboured execution. He was once reproached that he resorted to tricks in painting, and this habit of splitting up his brush given as an instance; but he retorted with justice that if his method gave as true an imitative appearance of fur as could be obtained by the laborious process of painting it hair by hair, it was equally satisfactory and far more painter-like. It is probable that had Lawrence trusted in his own powers as he did in early days before he had name and fame to lose, he would have been more successful as a painter. He was fettered latterly by his very fastidiousness and desire of surface-finish, as well as by his endeavour to give the most polished aspect of his sitter. Reynolds and Gainsborough, the latter more especially, struck off some of their best portraits at a single sitting, and it is told of Lawrence, that having tried a portrait of Curran, and after many sittings totally failed, he met the great Irish orator at a party, saw the fire of his eye and the energy of the natural man under the influence of after-dinner freedom, and exclaimed that the portrait he had laboured over was no portrait at all. He asked and obtained another sitting on the only day that intervened before Curran's departure for Ireland, and at that one sitting completed a fine likeness of this extraordinary man.

Howard, R.A., tells us Lawrence "painted that admirable picture of Hamlet in so short a time as one week,"—a very remarkable fact, if correct; but he also adds that "in the latter part of Lawrence's life, when his great practice might have been expected to make him more rapid in the completion of his works, the increased pains he took, arising, no doubt, from his improved perceptions, acquired for him the character of slowness." Howard wrote a long criticism on Lawrence as an artist, in which he gives him indisputable claim to rank with Titian, Vandyke, Reynolds and Velasquez; he says that Reynolds, "in rich and mellow colouring, came nearest to Titian," and in his exquisite representations of infant character, surpassed him. "If Lawrence," he adds, "must yield to his great rivals in these points, he went beyond them and Vandyke too, as a draughtsman—indeed, against the latter and Velasquez he may dispute the palm in all respects, and with greatly the advantage in point of variety and invention." This passage shows how Lawrence was estimated by his immediate contemporaries; it is needless to say we cannot agree in it, but if Lawrence cannot be placed in the first rank as a portrait painter, he has this merit at least, that immediately succeeding Sir Joshua, he yet adopted a distinct and characteristic style of his own. Others of his contemporaries were content to be mere followers of Reynolds, repeating his arrangements and copying his manner, even in those faulty executive processes for which he, at least, had the excuse that they arose from his continued search after something higher and better than he had yet attained, while their aim was merely to be like him.

Lawrence, on the contrary, after his first start, while

the glory of Reynolds filled as it were the atmosphere of art, and the young painter made some slight attempts at imitating him, soon adopted and ever continued to maintain a manner of his own; it had this good influence on the school, that it encouraged more careful drawing, and the study of the head by this means, before commencing painting. It also contributed to restrain awhile the use of bad vehicles and fugitive pigments, and hence also the faulty execution which had arisen from the pranks of Reynolds; but Lawrence's example tended to bring about that prevailing chalkiness of which Wilkie complained on his return from the Continent, and which, after Lawrence's death, he laboured by such fatal means to change. To this effect on our school, Howard unconsciously bears witness when he says, "In vivid and varied characters, he (Lawrence) has, perhaps, no rival, and may be said to have enlarged the boundaries of his art, changing by degrees the character of our annual exhibitions, and giving them at length one of acknowledged and unprecedented splendour," or, as we should say, that somewhat *clinquant* character which it should be the effort of our artists to restrain. We would conclude our notice by saying, that while we are obliged to allow that Lawrence ranks below his immediate predecessors of the English school, it was hardly possible, at his death, to point to a successor likely to stand beside him in the opinion of posterity.

CHAPTER II.

THE CONTEMPORARIES OF LAWRENCE.

Sir Henry Raeburn, R.A.—Native of Scotland—Apprenticed to a Goldsmith—Turns to Art—Successful in Miniature—Afterwards in Oil Life-size—After travelling in Italy, settles in Edinburgh—And gains Distinction—Opinion upon his Art—*John Hoppner, R.A.*—Gossip connected with his Birth—Chorister in the Chapel Royal—Studies Art—Gains the Academy Gold Medal—Marries—Adopts Portrait Art—His Progress—Enjoys the Court Favour—Called the Whig Portrait-painter—Rivalry with Lawrence—Ill-health—His Temper tried by Sitters—His Subject-pictures and Portraits criticized—*William Owen, R.A.*—Early Love of Art—Student of the Academy—Pupil of Catton, R.A.—Commences Portrait Art—Establishes his Reputation—Elected into the Academy—Portrait Painter to the Prince Regent—His Portraits and Subjects from Rustic Life—Long Ill-health—And Death—*Sir Martin Archer Shee, P.R.A.*—Parentage—Studies in the Dublin Art-schools—Tries his Fortune in London—Paints Portraits—Chiefly Theatrical—Attempts History—His Prospero and Miranda—"Rhymes on Art" and other Writings—Elected President of the Academy—Witness before the House of Commons' Committee—Zealous Defence of the Academy—Opinion upon his Art—"The Tiptoe School"—Death—*Thomas Phillips, R.A.*—Apprenticed to a Glass-painter—Adopts Portrait-painting—His Subject-pictures—Character of his Art—*John Jackson, R.A.*—Son of a Village Tailor—Becomes an Artist—Finds Friends—Comes to London—His Success in small Water-Colour Portraits—Followed by Portraits in Oil—Elected into the Academy—Visits Italy—His Art Merits—Character and Death—*George H. Harlow*—Left with a widowed Mother—A spoilt Boy—True Genius for Art—Commences its Study—Pupil of Lawrence—Tries Portraiture—Paints Theatrical Portraits—Falls into Extravagance and Difficulties—Visits Italy—Returns bent on History—Illness and early Death—His Art criticized—"The Trial of Queen Catherine!"—*Sir Watson Gordon, R.A.*—Of a Berwickshire Family—Intended for the Army—Turns to Art—Settles to Portraiture—Paints the Scottish Celebrities—Becomes President of the Scotch Academy—Opinion upon his Works—*Henry Peyronnet Briggs, R.A.*—Enters the Schools of the Academy—Begins Life as a Subject-painter—His Works described—Elected into the Academy—Turns to Portraiture to provide for his Family.

WHILE Reynolds, with the single exception of Gainsborough, who in his day was styled a landscape-painter,

stood alone and far above rivalry in portrait-art, Lawrence had many rivals who, far from yielding the palm, long contested with him the pre-eminence which, assisted by fashion and court-favour, he at last secured. The men and the times had alike changed. Lawrence when at the head of his profession was far from obtaining the unapproachable excellence of Reynolds and Gainsborough, and the ranks of art had also been largely extended since the foundation of the Royal Academy, by distinguished artists chiefly trained in its schools, who became the formidable competitors of Lawrence.

In commencing with *Sir Henry Raeburn*, R.A., the earliest of these men in point of date, we can hardly designate him as a competitor. A native of Scotland, the most distinguished portrait painter of that country since the days of Jamesone, he was born 4th March, 1756, at Stockbridge, a suburb of Edinburgh, and had there his art training and practice. The son of a respectable manufacturer, and at an early age left an orphan, he was educated at Christ's Hospital; and at the age of fifteen was apprenticed to an eminent goldsmith at Edinburgh. His love of drawing led him to attempt portraits, and he soon attracted notice by his skill in miniature, so much so that he gained sufficient employment to enable him to obtain his release from his master. He had had no teaching, it is said, except some hints from David Martin, a portrait painter, who then had the chief practice in the Northern metropolis, but his miniatures show such art treatment as could not have been attained without the means, at least, of studying fine works. As his powers increased he tried full-size portraits in oil, and his success raised the jealousy of his quondam adviser. His sitters

increasing, he abandoned miniature, and devoted himself exclusively to oil. He worked in a free-spirited manner, and aiming at character succeeded in impressing it on his canvas. He was advancing in his profession by the strength of his own genius, when in his twenty-second year, fortune assisted him in taking a firmer footing, by the help of an estimable wife with whom he acquired some property, and he soon afterwards came to London. His early miniatures evinced a knowledge of the works of Reynolds, and his object was to obtain advice from the great painter. We are told that he was cordially received, that Sir Joshua saw his merits, admitted him for two months to his studio, and advised him to visit Rome, offering to assist him with funds. Though this was not needed, Reynolds gave him letters of introduction, and he set out for Italy with his wife.

Here he remained for two years, and then returning, settled in Edinburgh, in 1787, and soon gained full employment as a portrait painter, for years taking the lead in that branch of art. The most distinguished men of the Northern metropolis became his sitters, and many of them his personal friends. He was fond of architecture, and in 1795 he built a large house in York Place; the basement of which formed his studio, with the required offices, and the upper floor a handsome gallery for his pictures, lighted from the roof, while his family dwelling was at St. Bernard's, Stockbridge. He appeared to have quite taken root in the congenial soil of his native city; both his art and his society were highly esteemed, and he was surrounded by friends. He made no long visits to London, and had few opportunities of knowing the works of his contemporaries in that metropolis; yet

he probably longed for a larger sphere, and to measure himself with men whose fame at least must have been well known to him. He was ambitious too of the distinction which admission to the Royal Academy confers on its members, and had placed his name on their list of those who sought election. We are told that late in life he thought of establishing himself in London, but that Sir Thomas Lawrence, whom he consulted, succeeded in dissuading him; and this advice, it is insinuated, arose from the desire to keep him out of the way. Probably this was in 1810, in the May of which year Wilkie records that he "had a call from Raeburn, who told me he had come up to London to look out for a house, and to see if there was any prospect of establishing himself:" and a month later, Wilkie again notes, "Went with Raeburn to the Crown and Anchor to meet the gentlemen of the Royal Academy. I introduced him to Flaxman; after dinner he was asked by Beechey to sit near the president, and great attention was paid to him." He was evidently thought well of by his brother artists in London, and we can find many reasons why Lawrence, without laying himself open to any narrow-minded suspicions, might very conscientiously recommend an artist, in his fifty-fifth year, not to quit a field where, surrounded by tried friends, he had earned and maintained an undisputed pre-eminence in his profession, and thus break away from the companions whose society he loved, and enter into a contest with established rivals on a new field.

Honours, however, at last fell thick upon Raeburn, and in his native city. In 1812 he was elected President of the Society of Artists in Edinburgh; in 1814 associate; and in the following year, a full member of the Royal

Academy in London; and on the King's visit to Scotland in 1822, Raeburn was knighted, and soon after appointed his Majesty's Limner for Scotland. He did not long enjoy these honours. After a very short illness, without any marked symptoms, he died on the 8th July, 1823. His portraits were distinguished by great breadth, both of treatment and character. Commencing with the brush, he aimed to secure at once the individuality of his sitter, rather than to attain a likeness by the studied drawing of the features, and he succeeded in seizing a truthful and characteristic expression.

In characterizing the art of Raeburn we are placed in some difficulty from his practice being confined almost wholly to Scotland. Little opportunity has thus been afforded us of seeing many of his works. Those possessed by the National Gallery of Scotland do not impress us with so high an opinion of Raeburn's merits, as his reputation among his brother artists would imply. Moreover, his works are simply portraits, and do not command that attention as pictures, apart from the individuals they represent, as do those of Gainsborough or Reynolds, which are admired and purchased as works of art, and find their way into galleries and collections when the person portrayed is unknown or an object of total indifference. No doubt, Raeburn in some degree founded his art upon that of Reynolds, though, from the great difference in their execution and handling, we suspect that he studied Reynolds through the fine mezzotints of MacArdell and others, rather than direct from his paintings. We find the same value given to breadth of light and shade—so distinctive a quality of the English painter, and very fully given in the prints

from his works; but we find none of the richness, none of the impasto, of Reynolds. The Scotch painter's manner of execution is more like that of Gainsborough in its thinness and once-ness, with a certain appearance of facility which may have made Wilkie, when in Spain, remark that the works of Velasquez reminded him of Raeburn—but the low tone adopted by the Scottish president gives to his thin execution a somewhat starved and impoverished look, and he loses entirely the pearly freshness, so great a charm in Gainsborough; while the rich wealth of broken tints, or the glowing sunniness arising from the luminous brown shadows opposed to flat masses of light flesh colour in the pictures of Reynolds, are wholly absent.

It is said that Raeburn had a theory that as portraits are intended to be seen at some elevation on the walls of the apartment in which they are hung, so ought the sitter to be viewed from below, and that, acting on this principle, he painted his whole lengths as if level with the feet of the sitter. This obviated any danger of his being included in the "tip-toe school," but it caused the painter's subject to be seen under the least pleasing aspect—namely, looking under the jaw and up the nostrils of the sitter; the forehead also, the portion of the face which expresses the higher qualities of the cultivated man, being foreshortened, the more considerably in proportion as it recedes over prominent brows. It was no doubt from this practice of Raeburn that Sir Walter Scott complained that his portrait made him look clownish and jolter-headed—the animal features of the face, thus viewed, being increased, and the fine but peculiar and conical head of Scott reduced in

height and otherwise seen to disadvantage. Raeburn's art was more suited to male than female portraiture—he failed in giving the grace and loveliness of his female sitters, and it may fairly be assumed that he owed part of the reputation which he enjoyed to his somewhat isolated position as the head of his profession in Scotland, and might not have been able to sustain it to the full, had he removed to London.

John Hoppner, R.A., has been characterized as the most daring plagiarist of Reynolds, and the boldest rival of Lawrence. In the meagre information of his early days, given by his biographers, mystery and scandal have been attached to his birth. His mother is said to have been one of the German attendants at the royal palace, and George III. so particularly interested in him as to see that he was well-nursed and educated. We find it stated in the British Gallery of Contemporary Portraits, published by Cadell, the printer to the Royal Academy,—"This eminent artist was of German extraction. His father, we believe, came to this country some time before the commencement of the present reign, and he was born at Whitechapel on the 4th April, 1758," a date which is also given by his brother academician, Dance, in a brief memoir which accompanies his well-known portraits. We think this precise statement, and the fact that Hoppner was born above two years before George III. was king, or the occupant of the royal palace, may be accepted rather than the vague undated statements relative to Hoppner's birth, and the scandals which have been founded upon them. So far upon the vexed question of his parentage. There seems, however, none as to his having been at an early age a chorister in the royal

chapel, and that, manifesting a strong inclination for art, the king gave him some assistance for its study. This was probably when his voice naturally became unfitted for the choir, and we find that he entered the Royal Academy as a student in 1775, being then in his seventeenth year.

As a student he laboured diligently, and in 1782 gained the gold medal, the great prize of the academy, for an original painting from *King Lear;* and in the same year he married a daughter of Mrs. Wright, the celebrated modeller in wax. He showed much aptitude for landscape art, but at once adopted the portrait branch of his profession; then, it may be said, the only one to insure the artist a living. Early in his career he produced a portrait of Mrs. Jordan as the Comic Muse. This picture is at Hampton Court, and was an attempt beyond the young artist's powers. The group consists of two females life-size and whole length; the figures have a straddling action, with little taste and without poetic feeling; the drapery is wooden and without flow, and the colouring disagreeable and heavy. Later in his career (in 1791) Mrs. Jordan again sat to him as Hippolyta.

That he lost no time in entering upon the practice of his profession is evident, since we find his name in 1780, when barely twenty-two years of age, in the catalogue of the Royal Academy, where he exhibited No. 112, "A Primrose Girl," a subject he repeated more than once, and "A Portrait of a Lady." For some years he continued to exhibit portraits of "A Lady," of "A Gentleman," as they were then entered in the catalogue, leaving us in perfect ignorance as to the individuals represented, and their verification perfectly hopeless.

As, however, his practice increased, we learn the increase of his reputation by the dignities of his sitters, the catalogue recording portraits of "An Officer," "A Bishop," "Two Ladies of Quality," and when in 1784 he was residing in the fashionable neighbourhood of St. James's Square, he ranks among his sitters "A Nobleman's Son." This absurd practice, by which every one not of the blood royal was vaguely designated in the catalogue, was common to all the portraits it contained, until 1797. In 1798, searching for Hoppner's pictures, we were struck by his exhibiting twelve portraits, and that the names and titles of all the personages were given in full; surprised at the change, we examined the list of those by Lawrence, Beechey, Shee, and others, and found the same change had taken place, so it would seem that some custom which had hitherto prevailed, was by general consent broken through at this period, since which time common sense has prevailed—the records are more perfect, and the endeavour to particularize a painter's works has ceased to be an impossibility. It is to be wished that a still further change could be effected, and the description: head size, three-quarters, kit-cat, half, or whole length, affixed to the list of such works; this would facilitate many inquiries, adding but little to the trouble of the compiler of the catalogue.

However obtained, it is clear that Hoppner retained some influence in the palace. In 1785, he exhibited three portraits of the Princesses Sophia, Amelia, and Mary, and in 1789 is designated as portrait painter to the Prince of Wales, and is often employed by the prince and his brothers, the Dukes of York and Clarence, as well as by many of those most distinguished for

rank and fashion. His reputation largely increased; he was esteemed by many the first portrait painter since Reynolds, and Lawrence owned him to be a formidable rival; in 1793 he was elected an associate, and in 1795 a full member of the Royal Academy. By this time Lawrence, much his junior, had rapidly risen into court favour and fashionable distinction. He had been appointed portrait painter to the king, while, as we have seen, Hoppner held the same office under the prince, and the two artists are represented as of the two factions which then unhappily prevailed. We are amused by the tale of Hoppner having offended the king, who had been his friend, by praising Reynolds; and the tattle of his having used his ready wit and influence in support of Whiggism, whose talents and beauty were the reward and objects of his pencil alone. Art is of no party; and, above all parties, is indifferently sought by all. A glance at the names of the sitters who graced the studios of Lawrence and Hoppner will show at once how little such tales have to rest upon. Of the nature of the rivalry which existed between these two men, we speak on the best authority when quoting, from two of his letters, the words of Lawrence himself. He writes in 1810,—"You will be sorry to hear it, my most powerful competitor, he whom only (to my friends) I have acknowledged as my rival, is, I fear, sinking to the grave. I mean, of course, Hoppner. He has always been afflicted with bilious liver complaints (and to them must be greatly attributed the irritation of his mind), and now they have ended in confirmed dropsy. But though I think he cannot recover I do not wish his last illness should appear to be so reported by me. You will believe that I sincerely feel

the loss of a brother artist from whose works I have often gained instruction, and who has gone by my side in the race these eighteen years." And shortly afterwards, in a second letter, Lawrence adds,—"The death of Hoppner leaves me without a rival."

Hoppner had to contend with a chronic state of ill-health, arising from a constitution naturally weak; and much of his proverbial irritation, if not produced, was aggravated by the ailments which attend a diseased liver. He must have been often tried by his sitters—restless, impatient, crotchety, having their own ideas of their own perfections and the manner in which they should be rendered: for, let it be said, an agreeable sitter is the rare exception; and the painter must keep his sitter amused by conversation suited to his habits and capacity, if he does not wish to see before him a listless, emotionless face, which it would not do to perpetuate on his canvas. Hoppner told the critic Gifford, as an example of his annoyance, how "a wealthy stockbroker drove up to his door, whose carriages emptied into his hall, in Charles Street, a gentleman and lady, with five sons and seven daughters, all samples of *Pa* and *Ma*—as well fed and as city bred a comely family as any within the sound of Bow bells. 'Well, Mister Painter,' said he, 'here we are, a baker's dozen; how much will you demand for painting the whole *lot* of us; prompt payment for discount?' 'Why,' replied the astonished painter, viewing the questioner, who might be likened to a superannuated elephant, 'why, that will depend upon the dimensions, style, composition, and——' 'Oh, that is all settled,' quoth the enlightened broker; 'we are all to be touched

off in one piece as large as life, all seated upon our lawn at Clapham, and all singing God save the king.' "

Hoppner was essentially a portrait painter. In the long course of his practice we find a few fancy pictures, such as "Jupiter and Io," half length; "Belisarius," a kit cat; "A Standard-bearer," "A Nymph," "A Bacchante," "Cupid and Psyche," "A Sleeping Nymph," &c., commonplace subjects—most of them but slight deviations from portraiture, and none that can be truly classed as poetical or historic. As we have seen, Hoppner copied Sir Joshua, the attitudes of whose sitters he even adapted to his own compositions; he also followed Gainsborough in his backgrounds. Many of the portraits which he painted for the Prince of Wales are in the State apartments at St. James's—among them whole lengths of the Prince, the Duke of York, and two distinguished naval officers, Lord Nelson and Lord Rodney. These portraits are among his best works; they might pass even for indifferent works of the first president, which we own is but indifferent praise. Two or three of his whole lengths are at Hampton Court, to which place they have probably been banished from their sad state of dilapidation, arising from the painter's having copied the defective materials of Reynolds as well as his compositions and general arrangement. Those remaining at St. James's, painted after Reynolds's death, are less injured by the use of asphaltum; but they are devoid of any special originality in art, though highly respectable as portraits. Hoppner's colouring was thought brilliant, and yet mellow, by his contemporaries; but it has changed with time, and is now somewhat heavy and horny. We can well understand, however, that the tone

of his works, and their being painted more in the rich manner which Reynolds had made popular, gave them, in the eyes of those who had lived under the influence of the great master, a merit which placed them above the works of Lawrence—painted with a more starved manner, and aiming at brilliancy rather than tone—thus raising him unduly into rivalry with the king's painter, and placing him at the head of the old school, vacant by the death of Reynolds.

Hoppner was sometimes very happy in his portraits of ladies and children; his handling was free, his execution unlaboured, but his drawing often faulty. A portrait of Lady Culling Smith, with her daughters, the property of the Duke of Wellington, is a good example of his method, and of its relation to that of other painters of his day. It is unfinished; the right hand of the child standing in front of the mother has been sketched in, and the flesh colour painted with a broad tool down to the wrist, and left in the irregular forms of the brush. The flesh of this limb—in harmony as to tone with the rest of the picture—shows a tint mixed on the palette and painted at once; the left hand of the other child is very imperfect, and is evidently also painted with solid tints at once. The browns stand well, although the vehicle has been so sloppily used that there are streaks where it has dropped from the brush down the face of the picture. The head of the mother, which is very tender in expression and sweet, would not have been painted had there been no Reynolds. The painter's ill-health shortened his days, and he died on the 23rd of January, 1810, aged fifty-one years: a time of life which might still have left some years of promise.

In examining the works of Lawrence's contemporaries it is remarkable how repeatedly we are reminded of the great influence which the works of Reynolds have had upon our school. The artists to whom this chapter is devoted painted under this influence. They did not exhibit any high or original qualities in art. But though they did not obtain great distinction, or leave us works we may point to with full satisfaction, they yet form not unimportant links in the history of English art, and their portraits of many great personages will long occupy places in our mansions and public edifices.

William Owen, R.A., is no exception to this class. He was born at Ludlow, in Shropshire, in 1769—the more precise date is not recorded—and was the son of a bookseller. He received a fair education in the grammar school of his native town, and gave early indications of genius by sketching the beautiful scenery surrounding the town. In 1786 he came to London, as the pupil of Catton, R.A., and was admitted to the schools of the Royal Academy. He also gained an introduction to Reynolds, who was pleased with his indications of ability, and assisted him with his kindly advice. In 1792 and the following year he appeared on the walls of the Royal Academy as a portrait painter; but his natural talent appears to have inclined him to subjects of rustic life, elevated both above common life and mere portraiture by some reference to poetry or story. Of this class were his "Blind Beggar of Bethnal Green," "Village Schoolmistress," "The Road Side," "Fortune-teller," and many others, which would have held higher rank had not Gainsborough laboured so successfully before him in the same field.

Owen's art was, however, portraiture. In 1797, he exhibited a portrait of two sisters, by which he gained great credit, one of whom he soon afterwards married; and his proficiency and his sitters steadily increased. In 1800 he settled with his family in Pimlico, and kept a studio in Leicester Square. He now commenced some of his best works. A fine portrait of Mr. Pitt established his reputation, and was followed by successful portraits of Lord Grenville, the Duke of Buccleuch, and a long list of distinguished sitters. He was at the height of his practice, and was elected an associate of the Royal Academy in 1804, and a full member in 1806; followed in 1810—on the death of Hoppner—by the appointment of portrait painter to the Prince of Wales. At the summit of his prosperity his income, though it received but little increase by the prince's appointment, now reached 3,000*l.* a year, and in 1818 he removed both his family and his practice to Bruton Street. Here his health soon failed, probably from over-work, and for five years he was confined to his room, and unable to continue his art. In this state he died suddenly on the 11th of February, 1825, from the effect of laudanum wrongly labelled by the chemist who made up his prescriptions.

To the genius and aptitude for art with which Owen was gifted by nature, he added unwearied diligence. His drawing was superficial, but his manner of painting did not want power, and his colour, though with a tendency to be hot and monotonous, was good. His feeling for landscape was shown in the taste displayed in his backgrounds. His subject pictures were pleasing, and enjoyed a high reputation in his day, which has not been main-

tained in our own. A small work of this class, "The Dead Robin," is now in the Vernon collection at South Kensington. It hardly does justice to his talents in such subjects, but will serve to illustrate our remarks; the colouring is a little stainey—but the flesh round and pulpy; the whole has little character of the country, the dead bird has been taken out of a wicker cage, such as is used for thrushes and the larger songsters: the meshes of the wicker would not keep in so small a bird as a robin for a minute. The costume of the children is not of country, but of town children with their frocks off; the light and shadow is that of the studio, but the sentiment of the smaller child is well rendered. The picture has sadly failed, from the vehicle it is painted with.

It seems to require an apology to the memory of *Sir Martin Archer Shee, P.R.A.*, as hardly befitting one distinguished by such varied talents, who attained the rank of president of the Royal Academy, that we have given him a place only in this chapter; and yet in the plan of our work it is here that he finds his true place as an artist. He was descended from an Irish family of old Connaught lineage, and was born in Dublin, 20th December, 1769. His first attachment was to art, and he was fortunate in being placed under Robert L. West, then the talented master of the school connected with the Dublin Royal Society. He very early commenced portraiture, and soon met with some encouragement and success. In the summer of 1788, he tempted fortune by removing to London. Disappointed in the hope of what patronage was to do for him in our metropolis, he set steadily to work. He painted such portraits as offered, and found some profit in making reduced copies for the engraver, of the paintings

forming "The Macklin Gallery," and was stimulated by the success of Lawrence, who he says, writing in 1789, "Of all the young artists stands foremost, and deservedly carries away the greatest share of praise. He, I think, will be of service to me, as you may be sure I am not a little incited to exertion by his merit. The small difference in years between him and me, rouses me more to emulation than all the artists in London put together."

Shee soon after met with friends in London, who were well disposed to assist him. He had exhibited two heads in 1789, and he now completed four portraits, which he submitted for exhibition in 1790, but was grievously disappointed that they gained no place on the academy walls. Made known by an Irish relative to Burke, he was by him favourably introduced to Reynolds as "his little relative," and by the advice of Sir Joshua, entered the schools of the Royal Academy; though with some hurt to his pride, as he thought he had finished his pupilage in Dublin. In 1791 he exhibited his first whole length, and struggling on like others have done before him and since, now elated by a good work well placed in the exhibition, now depressed by want of success, he quietly gained a name and a place in art. His earliest works were mainly theatrical portraits; Lewis, Stephen Kemble, Pope, Fawcett, and others, were painted by him in character; and he tells of an historical attempt exhibited in 1794, which had cost him at intervals, three years' thought and toil, "The Daughter of Jephthah lamenting with her Companions." In 1798 he exhibited a large equestrian portrait, which added to his reputation; and in the following year gained his

election as associate, and in 1800, as member of the Academy.

Shee's constant occupation in art was portraiture, yet he found time to try his hand at subject-pictures. "Lavinia," "Belisarius," (his presentation picture to the Royal Academy), "A Peasant Girl," and, taking a still higher flight, "Prospero and Miranda, the Storm Scene." Most ambitious young painters, who have mastered the figure, are tempted to make at least one great historic effort on a grand scale: this last subject was Shee's. We do not know the work; indeed, it is a strange mystery and a wonder what becomes of such works. Some, we fear, suffer from the ruthless hands of their authors in later years; this, however, we are told, remained in the painter's gallery till his death. It was exhibited in the Academy, and Sir Martin's biographer says that it was, in "the unusual amount of its superficial extension, fully kept in countenance by a still more ambitious production from the pencil of Mr. Lawrence,"—the "Satan Calling up his Legions," described in the preceding chapter. Shee received, we are also told, a candid criticism from an acquaintance, in answer to his question upon the general effect of the exhibition where they casually met:—"Why, sir, it's well enough in its way; but I can't imagine, sir, what possesses the artists to send such large, ugly things. Now, there, for instance,"—pointing up with his cane to the "Prospero and Miranda,"—"there is a great, ugly thing, sir; and there again, sir,"—turning round, and with equal disgust, and directing his cane towards the "Satan,"—"there's another, great, ugly thing. What can the painters mean by it?" The wits also had their say; and of these two

works—as unmarketable in size as in subject—suggested that "Satan Calling up his Legions" would have a symbolical historic propriety in the lecture-room of the Incorporated Law Society; and "Prospero Raising the Wind," find a fit place in the Stock Exchange. A good story and a witty commentary, derived also from the best authority; the more's the pity we have to spoil it. But a careful examination of the Academy catalogues, to enable us to verify the facts, has revealed to us that Lawrence's "Satan Calling up his Legions," was exhibited in 1797, (No. 170), and Shee's "Prospero and Miranda," in 1806 (No. 229).

To his portraits—not his historical attempts—Shee acknowledged that he owed his election into the Academy. By portraiture he had established his reputation, and steadily following this art, he found employment, if it did not lead to fortune. But he was not a man of one talent. He was early known as a critic and writer on art. His *Rhymes on Art*, published in 1805, gave him a literary reputation, and he was apostrophized in Byron's satire of *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*:—

> "And here let Shee and genius find a place,
> Whose pen and pencil yield an equal grace."

In 1809 he published a continuation of his rhymes under the title of *Elements of Art*, and next, among other lesser writings in 1824, *Alasco, a Tragedy*, which was withdrawn from the theatre in consequence of some considerable expurgations absurdly insisted upon by the deputy licenser of plays. He also published anonymously, in 1829, *Old Coŭrt*, a novel, which attracted but little attention. He had gained the esteem of his profession. A man of both artistic and literary talent; of

sound judgment and good business talents, of gentlemanly breeding and manners, able to express himself well on all occasions, and devoted to the interests of art, he was deemed by his friends a worthy successor to the presidential chair on the death of West. But he himself at once candidly admitted and supported the superior claims of Lawrence, on whose death, in 1830, he was almost unanimously elected to the rank of President, and received the honour of knighthood. The office of portrait painter in ordinary, which had been held by his predecessors Lawrence and Reynolds, and brought some lucrative commissions, had been given to Sir David Wilkie, and Shee was placed in an ostensible position, entailing much expense and great devotion of his time, without the emolument which had theretofore been enjoyed with it.

Sir Martin's presidency had fallen on troubled times. The vexed questions connected with the erection of the National Gallery in Trafalgar Square, of which the Royal Academy was to occupy one wing, came at once upon him. He had to maintain the privileged rights the Academy had so long enjoyed without question at Somerset House, and their interests as affected by the proposed removal. He had to assert the character of the Academy in the face of attacks made by a party in the House of Commons, and before the Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry which sat in 1836, to which we have already referred in a previous chapter. In all these weighty matters the president acted with promptitude, zeal, and ability, not in the cause of the Royal Academy alone, but in the interests of art in their widest sense; and signally justified the choice of his colleagues, which

placed him in a position to render important services to his profession.

Among his later works he painted in 1834-5, the portraits of William III. and Queen Adelaide, which are now at Windsor; and in 1842, a portrait of Queen Victoria for the Royal Academy. We may judge of Shee's early art by the picture of Lewis the comedian in the character of the *Marquis*, in "The Midnight Hour," bequeathed by the comedian's son to the National Gallery (No. 677). This was painted in 1791, and was the first whole-length by him which obtained a place on the Academy walls. It is an exceedingly clever work, and not too much like Reynolds,—the common fault of the young painters of that time. Easy in action and well-drawn, it has much individuality of character, and no doubt was a good likeness, with just a flavour of the natural affectation of the actor. Like most portraits by young men (Shee was in his twenty-first year), it is very carefully finished; the flesh is a little ruddy, and the cheeks have the appearance of rouge, not unsuitable in the portrait of an actor, but a fault apparent in most of Shee's after works. The handling is sharper, and the touch more square than in his later works, in which he fell into a method of painting as if with a thick and somewhat viscid vehicle; the colour, after being laid by the brush, softened and smoothed by an extensive use of the "sweetener," giving the flesh an unnatural softness, while it is wanting in that interchange of cutting with softened edges, so valuable in aiding relief. The portrait of Morton the comedian (No. 368), painted some twenty years afterwards, will illustrate the faults of this latter method: the darks of the crimson curtain in

the whole-length have a little failed; which is seldom the case in his works. The promise of his early portrait was not carried out in his after-years; that is to say, he did not improve very greatly upon this early work, which is certainly in some qualities equal to his best portraits, and free from the over-laboured appearance of those painted in his full career.

It has not been our good fortune to see any of his larger historical or poetical attempts. He says of himself on his first arrival in London, "I am making an experiment in the historical line, and have nearly finished a picture of King Lear in the storm with Gloster and Edgar. Whether it will be well enough to do me credit, I cannot say. The trial has, however, showed me that I have more invention than I thought." This invention, however, is not apparent in the small poetical attempt in the Vernon Collection, "An Infant Bacchus;" a work that has none of the *riant* look of infancy which charms us so much in Sir Joshua's sprites and children, nor has it any particular look of Bacchus except his plumpness and the bunch of grapes, that the child holds up for its special gratification: in fact, though a tolerably good commonplace work, it does not seem to have an atom of inspiration.

We have before alluded to Haydon's sneering attacks on the portrait painters of his day, in his continuous advertisement of "the Tiptoe School;" which was mainly levelled at Shee, who had incurred Haydon's wrath, by his manful conduct before the House of Commons' Committee of 1836. Haydon asserted that the portrait painters always painted their full-length figures standing on the tops of their toes, and he ironically gave linear rules how to draw the feet properly in perspective.

But he was himself ignorant of the cause of the apparent error; which, moreover, to suit his own purposes, he greatly exaggerated. The feet were mostly right in perspective, in relation to the objects in the foreground, but the loose and careless habits of the portrait painters, or their desire after some effective arrangement of light and shade, often led them into the gross error of having one horizon for their foreground objects, and a totally different one for the background. This is seen in Shee's "Portrait of William IV." now in the Council room of the Royal Academy, although in a less degree than in many other works. In this picture, the top of the table in the right, on which the crown rests, is just on a level with the eye, and the circular lines of the crown are drawn as if in plain elevation, as an architect would call it; but Windsor Castle on the left, whose round tower is seen just above the ground plane on which the king is standing, from the perspective curve of its lines, and as we do *not* see the top, must have a horizon two feet lower down than the table, so that we have two horizons in the same picture; and if the feet of the king are referred to the lower one, he has partially the appearance of standing on his toes.

We would not, however, credit Shee particularly with this fault: Lawrence is a frequent and far greater sinner; and we remember that when the late Professor of perspective pointed out to an eminent painter a like fault in a portrait of the Duke of Devonshire, in which Chatsworth was seen in the distance in very false perspective, the painter justified it by saying that it must be recollected Chatsworth was on a "devil of a hill," showing twofold error in his very justification:

first, that anything could justify the eye being supposed in two places at once; and, secondly, his want of knowledge, that if the mansion were on a hill—the higher the hill the higher the horizon would seem to be; instead of this being a reason for lowering it down to the ground.

Shee's last contributions to the exhibition were in 1845. Age, and the exertions he had undergone, had begun to tell upon him. He had for some time suffered from illness, which increasing, he resigned his office of president in 1845, but was induced by the affectionate wishes of the Academy to resume it. It was well known that his duties as president had encroached upon his means, and the Academy assigned him 300*l.* a year from their funds. The Queen also granted a civil list pension of 200*l.* a year to Lady Shee. But though he consented to resume his office, his health gradually declined, and his death, accelerated by the sudden death of his wife, took place at Brighton on the 19th August, 1850, in his eighty-first year.

Thomas Phillips, R.A., another contemporary who passed a long life in the practice of portrait-art, was born of respectable parents at Dudley, in Warwickshire, 18th October, 1770. He was placed by them with Mr. Edgington, the well-known glass-painter, at Birmingham, but fostering higher aims he came to London at the end of 1790; and West, P.R.A., is said to have found him employment connected with the execution of his designs for the painted glass windows at Windsor. In 1792, Phillips appears as an exhibitor of a view of Windsor Castle, and the next year of a more ambitious work, "Death of Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, at the Battle of

Chatillon," and also of "Ruth and her Mother-in-Law." In 1794, he exhibited works of the same class with one portrait, and henceforth adopting portraiture as his chief pursuit, he steadily and industriously made his way. In 1804, he was elected associate, and in 1808, a full member of the Academy. The subject of his presentation picture was "Venus and Adonis." His portraits were faithful, and he found full employment, many persons of distinction sitting to him. In 1824, he was appointed Professor of Painting to the Royal Academy, and travelled to Rome, the better to fit himself for the office. His lectures were published. He wrote some articles on art subjects for "Rees' Encyclopedia," and occasionally for other publications. He died, 20th April, 1845, in his seventy-fifth year.

The portraits of Phillips are marked by soberness and propriety, by negative rather than positive qualities; they are generally good as to likeness, solid and careful in execution, free from meretricious colour and truthful as to character. He takes no rank as a colourist, but a pleasant tone pervades his works. These remarks apply, in a degree, to the picture he presented to the Academy on his election; it is prosaic and not poetical—though classical in subject it has no flavour of antiquity. "The Woodland Nymph" in the Vernon Gallery, is amenable to the same criticism, it is simply a lady of the artist's circle. The hair is cut and dressed to the fashion of the day, and though termed a wood-nymph, it can only be deemed so, by the same courtesy as was extended to the poets who wrote, in the previous century, pastorals of Corydon and Phyllis, without a thought of pastoral life. The drawing of the hands and arms, moreover, is defec-

tive, poor, and wooden; and we feel that he wisely left such subjects and devoted himself to portrait-painting, for which he was in many respects so much better qualified.

John Jackson, R.A., is another example of one possessing many fine qualities in art, yet falling short of excellence. He was the son of the village tailor, at Lastingham, in the North Riding of Yorkshire, where he was born on the 31st of May, 1778. He was apprenticed to his father's trade, but was soon known in this out-of-the-way village by his attempts to draw the portraits of his companions; by these attempts he attracted the notice of Lord Mulgrave and Sir George Beaumont, the latter of whom induced him to make a trial at painting in oil, and lent to him, for that purpose, Sir Joshua's portrait of George Colman the Dramatist; but in his native village the materials were wanting, and Jackson was indebted to the kindness of a friend, a house-painter, who gave him the use of his workshop, and by whose aid the young artist soon improvised tools and colours sufficient to make a copy that surprised his patron, and satisfied him that Jackson was intended by nature for the pursuit of art. Sir George is said, after consultation with Jackson's other patron, Lord Mulgrave, to have advised the young painter to go to London, as the best means of enabling him to study for the profession, and to have generously offered him a table at his own expense and 50*l.* a year until he had gained a footing in the great capital. Under these favourable auspices he came to town, and in 1805 was admitted a student of the Royal Academy.

His attempts, although, as we have seen, he had painted in oil before he left the country, had hitherto been like-

nesses taken in pencil and slightly tinted with water-colour, and his first portraits in oil did not give much promise. His water-colour portraits were, however, as he improved, universally admired; the heads were well drawn, the likenesses faithful, and spiritedly though carefully finished. Many of the heads engraved in "Cadell's Portraits of Illustrious Persons of the 18th Century," were drawn by Jackson in this manner, and his water-colour practice was extensive and already produced him a handsome income. He did not, indeed, abandon the hope of the higher distinction to be gained by portraiture in oil; and trying the wide-spread canvas of that medium, he soon attained complete success.

In 1816, he was elected an associate of the Royal Academy, and travelled through Holland and Flanders, studying the art of the Dutch and Flemish Schools. In 1818, he became a full member of the Academy, and in the following year he visited the chief cities of Northern Italy and Rome. Sitters gathered round him. He wrought with great facility and extraordinary rapidity, and during the last years of his practice his portraits displayed great ability: solidly and powerfully painted, faithful, but wanting elevation of character; in his female portraits simple, without any meretricious attempts at simpering graces or the millinery of dress. He particularly excelled in the subdued richness of his colour, a quality in which Leslie, R.A., said "Lawrence certainly never approached him," and in another place, "that he stood with Lawrence and Owen, and occasionally before either of them, in the first rank of portraiture."

His portrait of Flaxman was greatly admired by his brother artists, and when exhibited, Sir Thomas Law-

rence praised it warmly at the public dinner before the opening of the exhibition, speaking of it as "a great achievement of the English School, and a picture of which Vandyke might have felt proud to own himself the author." We are well aware that Sir Thomas was rather a politician in praise, but though so many years have passed, we can well recollect our own great pleasure at seeing this portrait on the walls. The execution was different to that of most of the other painters' works; it appeared laid in with pure and somewhat crude tints, as he would have laid in his first broad hatchings in water colours. Over this a thin painting gave the broken and mottled hue of flesh, and put the work into unity; it was then lowered in tone by a slight general glaze. It is related that a French artist of eminence, standing before this picture in the exhibition, was heard to say "fine—very fine—almost as fine as Gerard," and, growing in admiration as he continued to examine it, "quite as fine as Gerard," which, from a Frenchman, was a high proof of his appreciation of its excellence.

Two portraits by Jackson are to be found in the Sheepshanks' Collection, one of himself and one of the great Reform Minister, Earl Grey; that of himself is firmly painted, as at once, with great vigour, with a full brush and much impasto; the colour is much finer than most of Lawrence's heads. The portrait of Earl Grey is more tame, and somewhat sleepy; it seems over-anxious in execution, and has less of individuality than the former work. Jackson's manner was original, differing from that of his contemporaries, and when he laid himself out to produce a fine work, he showed that he had real powers; too often, however, his portraits were of neces-

sity painted too much as a matter of business, and were poor and weak in execution. Such is the portrait of Miss Siddons in the Vernon Collection. Although a clever man, he made less impression by his art than others of far less merit.

Jackson was of the Methodist persuasion, and his connection with that body led to his being usually employed to produce the monthly portrait for the *Evangelical Magazine*, the organ of that body, and thus also to a connection extensive, although not lucrative. Unlike sectarians in general, he was liberal in his feelings to the Church, and had such an affection for his native parish of Lastingham, as to copy, on an enlarged scale, the picture of Christ in the Garden, by Correggio, which he had borrowed for that purpose from the Duke of Wellington, and present it as an altar-piece to the village church. He was a man of deep religious feeling, but in the two last years of his life fell into a desponding, low state of health, frequented prayer-meetings, and sometimes officiated in the choir. He was twice married: his second wife was the daughter of James Ward, R.A., who on her husband's death, June 1, 1831, was left with three children; they would have been wholly without provision, but for that generous aid the Academy extends to distress, both of its own members and of the artistic body generally. Jackson had in early life been indebted to the kindness both of Lord Mulgrave and Sir George Beaumont; he followed both to the grave, and on the occasion of the funeral of the latter, was smitten with the illness that proved fatal to himself. He was a frank and amiable man in private life; his friend Constable wrote thus of him:—"He is a great loss to the Academy and the

public. By his friends he will be for ever missed; and he had no enemy. He did a great deal of good, much more, I believe, than is generally known, and he never did any harm to any living creature. My sincere belief is, that he is at this moment in heaven."

George Henry Harlow, one of those painters who, it is thought, had he been spared, might have proved a competitor of Lawrence more formidable than any other, had the misfortune to be a posthumous child. His father, who had realized money in the China trade, died some few months before the birth of his only son on the 10th of June, 1787. The mother was left a widow with five daughters and one infant son, who was petted and spoiled, as a matter of course, by the whole family, and grew up to think himself, almost before his boyhood was passed, a man, and a most important personage too. Some excuse may well be made for the females of the family, since young George early gave indications of great talent, and must have been a handsome youth.

So clear was the bent of his genius towards art, that his mother was induced to agree to his following it as a profession; she placed him first with De Cort, afterwards with Drummond, the Associate, and finally with Sir Thomas Lawrence, who was paid a sum of money to allow the young man the run of his studio, and to pick up any accidental scraps of information that might fall in his way—seeing Lawrence's pictures in progress, if he did not see him paint, the set of his pallet, his vehicles and processes, and occasionally getting a sententious scrap of wisdom from the president, which he might apply or not as he had the ability or wisdom. He did not continue with Lawrence above eighteen months;

but he imbibed somewhat his manner. He quarrelled with the mechanical part of the work assigned to him, and did not like the cold graciousness of his master. This, added to his vain appreciation of his own powers, led to their separating, not on the best terms. When Harlow left the studio of Lawrence he had to depend upon his own industry and ability for his support. There is no doubt that he had adopted much of the peculiarity of Lawrence's manner and execution; a manner which, in his life-size works, gave them even a greater impression of meretriciousness than is seen in his master's; while in the small portraits of painters and men of eminence, which latterly he sought to paint for his own profit and improvement, the manner induced breadth with refinement, although it appeared empty and poor in the larger heads.

His early training had been that of a spoiled child. When he began to practise his profession as a means of livelihood, he painted, at a low price, portraits of many of the actors of the day, and thus fell into the society of men whose life is seldom the most regular; and being of an easy and careless disposition, he was led into dissipation, and soon became embarrassed in his circumstances. He had ever been noted for his love of dress, and his great attention to personal appearance—valuable qualities in the young if arising from a sense of neatness, and not the result of vanity; which last, it is to be feared, was the motive with young Harlow. What wonder, with these causes at work, that a young and thoughtless boy, who commenced housekeeping and the practice of his profession at sixteen, should, as Smith tells us, have "had *many* tailors' bills to discharge, without an income to discharge one," and

that he soon found himself mixed up with bill-brokers and attorneys, while with the elders of his profession he got a character for extravagance and dissipation.

The first time Harlow exhibited at the Royal Academy was in 1805, when we find No. 125, "A Portrait," and he continued to exhibit until the year of his death, with the exception of the year 1813. His works are almost wholly portraits; only three pictures that are not evidently portrait compositions, being included in the whole series, although historical compositions are by some enumerated in the list of his works. He was a competitor for Academy honours, but was unsuccessful; having only one scratch, that of Fuseli, who declared (very properly), that he voted for the painter, and not for the man. It must be remembered, also, that Harlow was only thirty-one when he died, and that had he lived to an average age he might have overcome the prejudice arising from his conceit, and would have had ample time to achieve the highest reputation and honours. He met with plenty of encouragement as a portrait painter, latterly charging forty guineas for a three-quarter, and having as many sitters as he could paint OL those terms." In June, 1818, he went to Italy, and stayed some time in Rome, where he received many flattering attentions, and was elected member of several Italian Academies, of which he was justly proud, and not a little vain. On the 13th January, 1819, he was again in England, his head full of historical pictures, and his art no doubt improved by the study of the works of the great masters; but, in the full ardour of youth and hope, and with many works commenced, he was attacked by a cold which resulted in a

glandular disease of the throat, and ended in his death on the 4th of February, 1819. He was buried in a vault of St. James's Church.

Harlow's reputation was great in his own day, and the public placed him higher as an artist than a review of his works will allow us to do. It is evident his genius was wholly for portraiture, that he would very probably have failed in historical compositions, and that even in portraiture he had probably done his best ere his early death. Several of his works were engraved, among others two groups of female heads, the subject of the first being "The Proposal," and of the second, "The Congratulation;" they were rather of the class pretty and pleasing, but were extremely popular—as was also the engraving from the picture of Matthews, the comedian, contemplating himself in some of his characters. In 1815, he commenced painting a series of small portraits of eminent painters and other notorieties of the day, and for this his art was extremely well suited; they are broad without being empty, and refined in execution without being minute. Among them we find the President West, 1815—Beechey and Northcote, 1816—Miss Stephens, Fuseli, &c. He repeated the portrait of Northcote. Of the two portraits of Northcote, the second, exhibited in 1817, was painted for Sir John Swinburne, Harlow having declined to repeat it unless Northcote would sit again. As it progressed, Harlow was at a loss what to introduce into the background, and, applying to Fuseli for advice, an hour-glass was suggested. Desirous to please his sitter, the young painter requested a friend to name this to Northcote—and we are told that Northcote was "ludicrously en-

raged," and desired Harlow to be informed that if he introduced the hour-glass, he had better put in the death's-head and cross-bones also, as these would, no doubt, be consistent with his personal appearance. Harlow blushed at not having understood Fuseli's sarcasm, and remembered that when he had been shown the portrait he had said, "My goot friend, you have given us a bag of bones." Small proof this of tact, but paralleled by the story Knowles tells of Harlow's observations as to his own scholarship, and his remarks on that of Fuseli. "Harlow was very vain," says Fuseli, "and among other things desired to be thought a scholar. 'I was educated a scholar at Westminster,' was his remark on one occasion; on another, he said, 'It is extraordinary that Fuseli, who is so fine a scholar, should suffer engravers to place translations under the plates taken from classical subjects painted by him; I was educated at Westminster School, and therefore wish to see the subjects given in the original language.' This was told to Fuseli, who, being certain of his ignorance, took occasion to expose it, by chalking on the wainscot in large letters a passage from the Greek of Œdipus, and requesting Harlow to read it; finding by his hesitation that he did not know a letter of it, he advised him to rely on his merit as a painter of small portraits, and not to pretend to scholarship."

From Knowles also we learn that Harlow's "Trial of Queen Katharine" owed much to the critical remarks of Fuseli, "for when he first saw the picture (chiefly in dead colour), he said, 'I do not disapprove of the general arrangement of your work, and I see you will give it a powerful effect of light and shadow;' but you

have here a composition of more than twenty figures, or I should say parts of figures, because you have not shown one leg or foot; this makes it very defective. Now, if you do not know how to draw legs and feet, I will show you,' and taking up a crayon, drew two on the wainscot of the room. Harlow profited by these remarks, and the next time we saw the picture, the whole arrangement was changed. Fuseli then said, 'So far you have done well; but now you have not introduced a back figure, to throw the eye of the spectator into the picture,' and then pointed out by what means he might improve it in this particular. Accordingly Harlow introduced the two boys who are taking up the cushion; that which shows the back is altogether due to Fuseli, and is certainly the best drawn figure in the picture. Fuseli afterwards attempted to get him to improve the drawing of the arms of the principal figure (Mrs. Siddons as Queen Katharine), but without much effect; for, having witnessed many ineffectual attempts of the painter, he desisted from further criticism, remarking, 'It is a pity that you never attended the Antique Academy.'"

Our own opinion of this picture is that it is clever, but *stagey*, with rather too much of the tableau and attitude school; and, although the painter prided himself upon it as an historical picture, that it has none of the qualities to uphold its claim to that rank. All the figures appear thinking of the spectator—posed for effect as to an audience, and looking out of the picture; which, no doubt, arises from the nature and source of the subject: still, it mars the effect when translated from dramatic to pictorial art—the former differing wholly from what should be a painter's treatment of the subject, since with

him the interest should be wholly *within* the picture. Here we see King Harry, seated on his throne in the background, and Katharine appealing, not to him, but to a supposed audience, while the Cardinal looks out, as if to observe the effect she produces on them. His contemporaries speak of the picture as one of extraordinary ability; but its reputation was of a mixed character, partly arising from the youth of the painter and his exaggerated estimate of his own merits, partly from the reputation of the great actors whose portraiture occupied a scene rather adopted from the stage than the offspring of the painter's own conception; and it is more than doubtful, if he had lived to commence historical painting as he proposed on his return from abroad, whether he would have achieved any success in this difficult branch of art.

Sir John Watson Gordon, R.A., the last of our portrait painters whom death has taken from us, was born in Edinburgh, in 1790, being the son of Captain Watson, of Overmans in Berwickshire,—a post-captain in the British navy. Through his father's family, young Gordon claimed a Scottish cousinship with Sir Walter Scott, through his mother's relations with Robertson the historian, and Falconer the seaman, who wrote "The Shipwreck," and afterwards perished in a storm at sea. Young Gordon was educated with a view to the army, and interest made for his entering the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich, but being too young for admission he was remitted for a time to the Trustees' School at Edinburgh, to improve himself in drawing. John Graham, who then was head master, must have been either an exceedingly clever teacher, or particularly fortunate

in his pupils, since Wilkie, Allan, and Burnet were among them, besides many others who afterwards attained a higher reputation than their master. Here Gordon remained four years, and whether it was the atmosphere of the place inspired him, or the clever companions by whom he was surrounded, after a time he turned his views towards art as a profession. His first efforts, like those of most young men, were in the direction of history painting. Shrewd no less as a youth than as a man, he soon found that his talent might be better employed in portraiture, and succeeding in his efforts, continued true to this branch of art all his life. After Raeburn's death in 1823, Watson Gordon became his successor in his Edinburgh practice, and all the celebrities of the Scottish capital visited his studio, —from Walter Scott to Professor Wilson among literary men; with Dr. Chalmers, among the theologians; Lord-Justice-General Hope and Lord-Justice Boyle, among the lawyers; the Earl of Hopetown, and a host of other eminent Scotsmen. Watson Gordon was one of the earliest members of the Scottish Academy; and in 1850, on the death of Sir W. Allan, became their president. At the same time, her Majesty gave him the vacant appointment of Queen's limner for Scotland, and conferred on him the honour of knighthood. Sir Watson Gordon had been elected an associate of the Royal Academy of London in 1841, and obtained the full honours of the body in 1851. Loving his profession, he lived in the practice of it, and led a single life in the social circle of his Scottish friends. True to his native city till the last, he died there, rather suddenly, on 1st June, 1864

His portraits are bold and manly, his figures well

placed on the canvas, and he at all times seized happily the best expression of his sitters, giving them character without an approach to caricature—the sagacity and shrewdness of the Scottish character in all its best aspects, when united to intellect and a high cultivation. He had little sense or feeling for colour, and never seemed to wish to escape from the black garments of his male sitters by the introduction of the *furniture*, in which most portrait painters so largely indulge. Frequently in his male portraits the only colour is that of the flesh, with a negative warmth in the background; yet there was a great harmony in the grey tones of his work, which prevents us feeling so much the absence of colour; and even his female portraits, in which the same scale predominated, did not lose so much from this cause as might have been expected. He was most successful in his male heads of persons advanced in life, which are painted more as completed sketches than pictures, and gain thereby great force, freshness, and vigour. His works when exhibited in Paris, in 1855, were greatly admired, particularly the portraits of Professor Wilson and the Provost of Peterhead, and won for him a medal on that occasion.

It is not right to close our list of the contemporaries of Lawrence without some notice of *Henry Perronet Briggs*, R.A., although he can hardly be so designated. Born in 1792, he entered as a student of the Royal Academy in 1811, and beginning life as a subject painter, won his way to honours by pictures which, if not of the highest class of art, have great merit in the construction of the subject, the frequent originality of action in the figures, and the mode of telling his story. "The first

"Conference between the Spaniards and Peruvians," now in the Vernon Gallery, and "The Attempt of Colonel Blood to Steal the Crown," presented to the Royal Academy on his election in 1832, are good specimens of his powers. The drawing is usually correct, the colouring forced and somewhat rank, and the flesh has often a polished and shining look, very different to the tender and somewhat absorbent nature of its true surface. There is also a large work by him in Greenwich Hospital, "George III. on board the Queen Charlotte presenting a sword to Earl Howe after the Victory of the 1st of June, 1794," a work for which the British Institution gave him a premium of 100 guineas.

After his election as a full member, Briggs almost entirely devoted himself to portraiture, finding himself compelled, from the confined patronage of art at that time and the necessities that followed upon his marriage of providing for the future household, to adopt this more lucrative branch of his profession. Many of the most eminent persons of the day sat to him. His portrait of Lord Eldon is one of his most characteristic works; but, in both his subject-pictures and his portraits, his colouring was rather strong than true, and his flesh painting hot in the shadows and forced in the lights. His wife, to whom he was much attached, died some years before him; his own death took place on the 18th January, 1844, in his fifty-first year.

CHAPTER III.

JOSEPH WILLIAM MALLORD TURNER, R.A.

The Associations of his Birthplace—Not calculated to awake Landscape Art—Early Works—Architectural Ruins and topographical Landscape—Finds new Scenes at Bristol and on the Wye—Truthful Power of his Drawing—His Study from Nature and at the Royal Academy—His impulsive Manner of Painting—Causes of the Decay in some of his Works — His characteristic Teaching described — His Lectures — Leaving his first Manner, attempts Nature's grandest Effects—The early Appreciation of his Art—His mystic Poems—His practice in Oil and his imitative Powers—Mistaken Charges of unfair Rivalry with other Painters—Effect of his Water-Colour Art upon his Practice in Oil—His early and later Manners described—And his best Works examined — Compared with Claude — Reminiscences of him — The "Varnishing Days"—Summary of his Art—Had no pre-Raphaelite Tendencies—His great Industry—Gift to the Nation—Death—Increased Value of his Works.

His birth-place and the scenes among which Turner passed his childhood, may be thought not the best fitted to form a landscape-painter, and to fill his youthful mind with images of beauty. Born 23rd April, 1775, the son of a hair-dresser of small means, and bred in Maiden Lane, in the heart of this great metropolis, he could enjoy very little of the sight of "fresh fields and pastures new." In the hovels and sheds of the Covent Garden of that day, he might make acquaintance with a few specimens of roots and flowers, and, strolling down to St. James's Park in the summer evenings, get a glimpse of trees and greensward. But even the park was far less foliated

than in the present day. Many of the old trees were stagged and dead, and new ones were not yet planted; the enclosure was merely a green field with a strait canal down the middle, strictly guarded, however, from the intrusion of the London boys by a high wooden fence in a dry ditch, a few sheep and oxen, waiting for the butcher, alone privileged to rove in the rank grass. Still there was green, and the sky had somewhat of a horizon, whilst in the nest of close and intricate alleys that bordered on Maiden Lane, and led from it into the great thoroughfares—alleys so narrow, that literally in some of them the inhabitants could shake hands out of opposite windows—it was but a mere strip of the bright heavens that could be seen by the world below.

But, winding down another set of lanes and alleys, young Turner might, and no doubt often did, wander away to the strand of the broad river; a river unequalled in the world for its picturesque variety, and not as yet spanned by so many bridges, or cumbered with steamboats, and steamboat-piers; not as yet quite so muddied and thickened with the refuse of the extra million dwellers on its shores. Here his love of rivers and river scenery, no doubt, was fostered. The first drawing he exhibited was a view on its southern bank, as was also the first oil picture—"Moonlight," a study at Millbank, now in the national collection; and his last days were passed in an obscure dwelling by its side, whence he could see its broad bosom gleaming under the western sun. The quaint picturesqueness and curious relics of architecture in the streets of his own neighbourhood may also account for his love of cities, and of architecture. Some of the characteristic relics that surrounded the home of his young

days are as they then were, and the unstudied irregularity of the main thoroughfares, still remains: Holborn, with its bars, and the Strand, with its churches in the midst; but some, like old Exeter Change, the mews at Charing Cross, and the picturesque old market in Covent Garden, have already been taken out of the way, and many others are doomed to be replaced by the ugliness of tubular girders and iron railroad bridges, while great spaces in the vicinity of his birth-place are being cleared for new bridge approaches and central railroad termini. In the young days of the painter, London had been untouched for nearly half a century, and it was not until Waterloo had, at a long interval, succeeded Trafalgar, and the land had had time to rest from war, that bridge and column grew to commemorate them, and wealth began to show itself in larger buildings and wider streets.

It is not very clearly stated by any of his biographers when young Turner began to show a love for art; but it is most probable that it was developed early, since in 1789, when only fourteen years of age, he was admitted a student in the Royal Academy, and in 1790 exhibited on its walls for the first time, "A View of the Archbishop's Palace at Lambeth," No. 644. Some sketches, which must be prior to either of these periods, are now exhibited at South Kensington. One of them is a rude pencil drawing, the sky and the water only being tinted blue, of the river Avon at Clifton (Frame No. 1), on which the artist has written, in a boyish hand, "Looking up the River from Wallace's Well;" another drawing is a slightly varied sketch, in colours, of the same river; and the sketch of "The North-west View of Malmesbury Abbey,"

in the same frame, which was made in 1791, seems to indicate a somewhat earlier date for the Bristol drawings, which were probably done on some visit to his uncle, a fellmonger at Bristol; while many bright glimpses of his native river, and most likely much early practice of sketching, must have arisen from his residence with another maternal uncle at Brentford, where he was sent to be nursed after one of his boyish illnesses.

Turner was from the beginning diligent in the pursuit of his profession, and soon began to turn it to profitable account: it is said that he exhibited his juvenile performances for sale in the windows of his father's shop in Maiden Lane; that he was employed to colour prints for Raphael Smith, the engraver, and to wash in backgrounds for the architects, a practice more resorted to half a century ago than in our own day. Even at this early time, and under such unpromising circumstances, there was an originality in his work: we are told that he was employed by a Mr. Dobson, an architect, to colour the perspective front of a mansion, and that in putting in the windows, Turner showed the effect of reflected light from the sky, contrasting with the inner dark of the room on the uneven surface of the panes. This was a new treatment, and his employer objected to it, declaring that the work must be coloured as was usual; that is, the panes an unvarying dark grey, the bars white. "It will spoil my drawing," said the artist. "Rather that than my work," answered the architect; "I must have it done as I wish." Turner doggedly obeyed, and when he had completed the work, left his employer altogether. The sequel of the story is curious: some time after, it occurred to the architect to

try a drawing on the principle he had disapproved, and remembering Turner's work he coloured it nearly the same. It was sent to the Royal Academy, and accepted, and was so much admired by Smirke, that he sought the acquaintance of Dobson, which led to a union between the families. So much for genius in the mere colouring of a window.

It would appear from the un-numbered sketches Turner left behind him, that he thoroughly appreciated and acted up to the maxim of "no day without a line," and that his sketch-book was always in requisition. Smith, it would seem, introduced him to Girtin; and also to Dr. Munro, who employed both Girtin and Turner, as we have already told, to sketch for him, paying them at the rate of half-a-crown an evening, and providing them with a supper after their labours. We also know that Turner gave lessons; receiving five shillings and even ten shillings per lesson—a large sum in those days.

Although London and its noble river afforded some of the earliest subjects for his pencil, he soon began to travel, to enlarge his field of study. His journey to his Bristol relatives had led him into river scenery widely different from that of the flat alluvion of the Thames; to a river walled and prisoned, and in places apparently land-locked in its stony channel. His early architectural and topographical labours gave him a taste for, and led him to examine, the noble ruins spread over the land. As a proof of this architectural and topographical feeling, Mr. Wornum tells us that of thirty-two drawings exhibited by Turner from 1790 to 1796, no less than twenty-three are architectural; principally views of the great cathedrals and abbey churches of the kingdom. As evidence of his

diligence and promptitude, we learn that Girtin having mentioned, in the presence of Turner, his intention to pay a sketching visit to St. Albans, but delaying to do so for a few days, he was surprised to meet his friend returning with a book of sketches; Turner having forestalled him and already reaped the harvest, while Girtin was thinking of starting to win it.

Mr. P. Cunningham says that, "finding topographical drawing a profitable pursuit that gave him fresh opportunities for sketching new compositions of nature and art, Turner never, even at this early period, allowed a season to pass without fresh excursions into the English counties. Thus from the pictures which he exhibited in 1795, we find that he had been within the previous year to Cambridge, Peterborough, Lincoln, Shrewsbury, Tintern, and Wrexham;" and before he became an associate of the Royal Academy in 1800, his exhibited works range over twenty-six counties of England and Wales, many of which he had apparently visited several times, at a period when travelling was far less easy than in our own day. Turner long continued his topographical labours for the booksellers, which led on to his undertaking, later in life, a series of works illustrating our cities, rivers and coast scenery. For some years prior to 1801, he designed the headings for the *Oxford Almanack*, which were engraved by M. A. Rooker until his death in that year. Wyatt, the frame-maker of Oxford, used to relate a characteristic story of Turner, but whether of this period or later is uncertain. He had employed this painter to make some drawings of Oxford, which obliged him to sit in the public street. The price to be paid for the work

was a liberal one, but, as annoyances and hindrances took place from the curiosity of spectators, before Turner began the drawing of Christ Church he made Wyatt obtain for him the loan of an old postchaise, which was so placed in the main street that Turner could work from the window; and when the drawing was paid for the painter insisted on receiving three shillings and sixpence which he had disbursed for the use of the old vehicle.

Turner, we have seen, began his art by sketching from nature, and never omitted any opportunity of enlarging his knowledge by the same means; continuing the practice to the latest period of a long life, as the following incident, related to have happened within two or three years of his death, will prove :—He had wandered away in the summer months along the coast of Normandy, as he said himself, looking out for storms and shipwrecks : he carried nothing with him but a change of linen and his sketch-book. Arrived at Eu, he found it necessary to have his shoes repaired, and took a lodging in the house of a fisherman. He had not been long there before an officer of the court inquired for him, and told him that Louis Philippe, the King of the French, who was then staying at the Château, hearing that Mr. Turner was in the town, had sent to desire his company to dinner (they had been well known to one another in England). Turner strove to apologize—pleaded his want of dress—but this was overruled; his usual costume was the dress-coat of the period, and he was assured that he only required a white neckcloth, and that the king must not be denied. The fisherman's wife easily provided a white neckcloth, by

cutting up some of her linen, and Turner declared that he spent one of the pleasantest of evenings in chat with his old Twickenham acquaintance. On starting for these excursions, he never intimated the route he intended to take, nor the time of his stay or of his return, this being determined by the weather and his success. The National Gallery alone possesses nearly 1,000 of his sketches, works of high excellence and of the most varied character, which were the fruits of these rambles.

In sketching, Turner used all methods; but rarely, very rarely, the medium of oil. And it is this water-colour tendency of his art, and this constant recurrence to nature, that gives the interpreting key to all his after practice: this will be seen as we proceed. Some of the sketches are merely a pencil outline, faithful as if traced from a camera—no timidity, no carelessness, no hesitation—but a clear, well-defined outline of the whole, and of its many details, as in the best topographical drawings. Firm must have been the hand, and well-educated the eye, of him who produced such works; no want of drawing power is evinced, although some must have been produced almost as rapidly as by the camera: done on the coach top, or on the deck of the boat tossed on the restless sea, under every circumstance of inconvenience and haste. Every form of nature is represented, foliage and weedage, leaf by leaf (as in Nos. 50 and 51). Birds, from the skein of flying ducks (No 22), to the swans, (No. 122). Beasts (as No. 52 and 53), and human beings in repose and in action. Slight "bits" from the wayside are there, as well as whole cities, house by house and edifice beside edifice (as Nos. 6 and 115). Cathedrals with all their varied details and enrichments.

Passing from the mere outlines, we find sketches of colour reckoned by thousands; of which some hundred or two are hung on the walls of the National Gallery, as a sample of what the nation alone possesses by this man's liberality, while of the numbers of such works in private hands it is impossible to form an estimate. Here again we have every variety of subject and every amount of labour, from the simplest blots of truth of relation, as in the two dark ships near the horizon on a sunset sky (87), or the slight splash of blue and distant Alps (88), to the most complete studies for the finished picture of the "Val d'Aosta." Sometimes simple flat washes of local tint indicate the whole of a wide extended landscape (98, 99, 100), sometimes the relation of mountain to sky, or of a bit of foreground to distance (76), is happily and minutely given; of mere studies of skies it is said that Turner's are to be reckoned by thousands. As he advanced in art he made sketches for his pictures, and sketches from nature on grey papers, heightening the lights, or giving the points of expression by white or body colour, but still using the colour of his masses translucently as if on white paper; some of these sketches, mere broad flat masses of colour, are so truly beautiful and effective, rendering nature so fully to us, that we seem to want no more completion, but are thoroughly satisfied with the result before us. Strange to say, these rare sketches that sparkle with the freshness of nature's dew-drops, are, while we write these notes, hung in juxtaposition on the same wall with the picture of the man of rules—the "brown tree" baronet who, although but an amateur (a clever one, truly), laid down the law to the born artists and men of genius of his day. Sir George

Beaumont's "Jacques Moralising" is side by side with Turner's sketches. The subject is very cleverly treated, the scene chosen would be beautiful did it remind us of the dews of nature or the breath of heaven; but these never seem to have fallen to moisten it, or breathed upon to refresh it. Yet all is strictly according to rule: the dark spot of the picture, the man's head, is duly brought out against the highest light, the foam of the waterfall: the focus of colour, the red vest of Jacques, contrasts learnedly with the grey of the placid water beneath the fall: the foreground is dark, according to rule: the trees have ranged themselves, or been arranged by the painter, with elegance and grace: the principal forms being repeated in a secondary group. Everything is in its right place; it is without fault; yet one of the little sketches that sparkle around it is well worth a dozen such *proper* pictures.

We have stated that in 1789, when only fourteen years of age, Turner was admitted a student of the Royal Academy. Here he went through the usual course of study, and, from some of his works that remain, would seem to have been admitted into the School of the Living Model. It has been objected to him that he could not draw the figure; and the ignorant laugh at many of the figures which he has introduced into his landscapes, while others detract from the Academy teaching for the same reason. But Turner's sketches show that he was a most ready and able draughtsman, while his effort is rather to give the right treatment to his figures—the true effect of light and sun and air, their true keeping in the picture, and the indefinite mystery of sunshine upon them—than to define their forms or to complete their outline.

Mr. Ruskin says:—"The Academy taught Turner nothing, not even the one thing it might have done,—the mechanical process of safe oil-painting, sure vehicles, and permanent colours." Such assertions as these are easily made, and difficult to disprove; but this is certain, Turner himself was not ungrateful to the Academy, either as to its teaching or its friendly membership, as his life-long fellowship with its members clearly proves. Moreover, his early pictures—when modes of painting learnt in the schools, clung about him—were safely and solidly painted, and show no signs of cracking. Witness his "Crossing the Brook," his "Richmond Hill," and many others of this period. Some notes upon nine or ten pictures of various periods, made on the occasion of Mr. Bicknell's sale in 1863, show that the works of his earlier time were in the soundest state, simply and carefully painted, and without any failure of colour. It was only when his eager pursuit of the effects of sunlight, mist, and extensive distance bathed in air and vapour, led him on to frequent scumblings, and at times to the use of water colours in his oil paintings, and his impulsive genius carried him away to paint hastily, and to force his works with rapid driers, that the foundations of these failures were laid.

Another cause of failure has also been hinted at,—Turner's known practice of painting largely upon his pictures on the "varnishing days." His careless indifference on such occasions to the preservation of his works, is seen in so many of his pictures, that it seems almost needless to give instances; but we may refer to one or two. The fine picture of "The Beach at Hastings," the property of Sir A. A.

Hood, is painted solidly, carefully, and in his best manner, but in the upper part of the sky there are large patches of pure magylph that have been put in—perhaps on the varnishing days—as golden cloudlets; they are spread on with the knife, while lower down the edge of rolling cloud is outlined with the same vehicle: when first done, they were no doubt wonderfully luminous and brilliant, but have now become brown and horny, and a blot to this otherwise perfect picture. In the same—almost wilful—mood, large patches of white have been spread over some of the fleecy clouds in the picture of "Line Fishing off Hastings," No. 207, in the Sheepshanks' Collection, which, from the pigment not having been used with the same vehicle as the rest of the picture, and from the pure surface obtained by spreading with the knife, has retained its brilliancy, and is out of keeping with the other parts of the painting. Moreover, at these times, such was his love of colour, that any rich tint on a brother painter's palette, so tempted him, that he would jokingly remove a large portion of it to his own, and immediately apply it to his picture, irrespective of the medium with which it was made up. From our own palette he has whisked off, on more occasions than one, a luscious knob of orange vermilion, or ultramarine, tempered with copal, and at once used it on a picture he was at work upon with a mastic magylph. Such a practice, productive of no mischief at the moment, would break up a picture when the harder drier began to act on that which was of a less contractile nature.

Again, as to the pictures left on his own walls for any time,—and this relates to all those now in the national collection, as well as to many others which

remained for years in his studio,—the utter neglect and carelessness with which they were treated, would have destroyed pictures of the strongest constitutions, much more the delicate, fragile works which he loved to produce. The scene in his rooms on the occasion of his funeral would have saddened any lover of art, for the works left behind, almost as much as for the genius that had passed away. The gallery seemed as if broom or dusting-brush had never troubled it. The carpet, or matting (its texture was undistinguishable from dirt), was worn and musty; the hangings, which had once been a gay amber colour, showed a dingy yellow hue where the colour was not washed out by the drippings from the ceiling: for the cove and the glass sky-lights were in a most dilapidated state, many panes broken and patched with old newspapers. From these places the wet had run down the walls, and loosened the plaster, so that it had actually fallen behind the canvas of one picture, "The Bay of Baiæ," which, hanging over the bottom of the frame, bagged outwards, with the mass of accumulated mortar and rubbish it upheld. Many of the pictures —"Crossing the Brook" among others—had large pieces chipped or scaled off; while others were so fast going to decay, that the gold first, and then the ground, had perished from the very frames, and the bare fir-wood beneath was exposed. It may well be supposed that in such a damp and mouldy atmosphere any pictures would suffer, much more the fragile works of Turner's last period, irregularly carried out as has been described. Many of those belonging to the nation have required a great deal of restoration to fit them to appear at all, and all have lost a portion of their first beauty and their first precious-

'ness. But surely when we learn that his earliest works are the best as to mere execution, and find the painter recklessly departing from good methods, careless and indifferent in the selection of vehicles and materials, and as to any proper consideration of his works, it is too much to enter such unfounded charges of bad methods and bad teaching against the schools: in which, moreover, he is said to have learnt nothing.

As no lists of the attendance of students were kept at that time, it is impossible to tell how much or how little Turner worked in the schools of the Academy; but it would seem fair to infer that much of the power of drawing and readiness of hand shown, soon after the date of his admission, in his sketches, resulted from the teaching of the Academy, rather than, in the absence of all evidence, except as to his studentship, to imply that one so diligent and laborious learnt nothing there. One thing is certain, that his brother members believed in his power not only to draw the figure but to instruct others, since they repeatedly elected him a Visitor in the life school (a duty not usually confided to a landscape painter); and those who studied in the schools during his visitorship will recollect the valuable assistance that he gave the students at those times. We, at least, truly valued his teaching. When a visitor in the life school he introduced a valuable practice, which it is to be regretted has not been continued: he chose for study a model as nearly as possible corresponding in form and character with some fine antique figure, which he placed by the side of the model posed in the same action; thus, the "Discobulus of Myron" with one of the best of our trained soldiers: the "Lizard Killer" with a youth in

the roundest beauty of adolescence: the "Venus de' Medici" beside a female in the first period of youthful womanhood. The idea was original and very instructive: it showed at once how much the antique sculptors had refined Nature; which, if in parts more beautiful than the *selected* form which is called *ideal*, as a whole looked common and vulgar by its side.

Turner's conversation, his lectures, and his advice were at all times enigmatical, not from want of knowledge, but from want of verbal power. Rare advice it was, if you could unriddle it, but so mysteriously given or expressed that it was hard to comprehend—conveyed sometimes in a few indistinct words, in a wave of the hand, a poke in the side, pointing at the same time to some part of a student's drawing, but saying nothing more than a "Humph!" or "What's that for?" Yet the fault hinted at, the thing to be altered was there, if you could but find it out; and if, after a deep puzzle, you did succeed in comprehending his meaning, he would congratulate you when he came round again, and give you some further hint; if not, he would leave you with another disdainful growl, or perhaps seizing your porte-crayon, or with his broad thumb, make you at once sensible of your fault. To a student who was intent on refining the forms before he had got the action of his figure, he would thrust with the point of his thumb at the place of the two nipples and the navel, and—very likely with the nail—draw down the curve of the depression of the sternum and linea alba, to show that pose, action and proportion were to be the first consideration. To another who, painting from the life, was insipidly finishing up a part without proper relation to the whole,

he would—taking the brush from his hand, and without a word—vigorously mark in the form of the shadow and the placing of the high lights, to indicate that the relations of the whole should be the student's first consideration. The schools were usually better attended during his visitorships than during those of most other members, from which it may be inferred that the students appreciated his teaching. This, however, relates to the middle period of his life, and not to the time now under consideration.

His lectures on perspective, after he was elected to the professorship, were, from his naturally enigmatical and ambiguous style of delivery, almost unintelligible. Half of each lecture was addressed to the attendant behind him, who was constantly busied, under his muttered directions, in selecting from a huge portfolio drawings and diagrams to illustrate his teaching; many of these were truly beautiful, speaking intelligibly enough to the eye, if his language did not to the ear. As illustrations of aërial perspective and the perspective of colour, many of his rarest drawings were at these lectures placed before the students in all the glory of their first unfaded freshness. A rare treat to our eyes they were. Stothard, the librarian to the Royal Academy, who was nearly deaf for some years before his death, was a constant attendant at Turner's lectures. A brother member, who judged of them rather from the known dryness of the subject, and the certainty of what Turner's delivery would be, than from any attendance on his part, asked the librarian why he was so constant. "Sir," said he, "there is much to *see* at Turner's lectures—much that I delight in seeing, though I cannot hear him."

It has already been remarked that the art of water-colour painting had its origin in topography, and that the minute attention to facts and details so necessary in topographical works was a direct and valuable initiation to the careful study of Nature. We have seen also that Turner began art as a water-colour painter, labouring at drawings of local scenery. The works which he exhibited at the Royal Academy for the first seven years were all *views*. But Turner's genius was not of a nature to allow him long to continue painting simply representative landscapes, or to treat his subjects merely topographically. In 1793, we note the first indication of an attempt to treat his picture as modified or changed by passing atmospheric effects. One of his works of this year is "The Rising Squall—hot wells from St. Vincent's Rocks." Still he continued for some time to confine himself principally to views of buildings, towns, &c.; no doubt studying effects in which he was hereafter to prove so great a master. In 1796, when he exhibited eleven works, we again find a pure subject picture, "Fishermen at Sea" (305). In 1797, he exhibited his first oil picture of "Moonlight," already alluded to, and another subject, "Fishermen Coming Ashore." In the exhibition previous to his admission to the associateship, and when we may presume his works were of sufficient importance and merit to justify the election which so shortly took place, he again exhibited eleven works: mere localities had now given place to the embodiment of some sentiment, some characteristic treatment of his subject, as sun-lighted, or shrouded in mist or storm. Of these eleven works, the description in the catalogue shows seven at least to have been of this character: we have

"Fishermen previous to a Storm" (55). "The Battle of the Nile" (275), "Kilgarran Castle, hazy sunrise" (305). "Sunny Morning" (325), "Warkworth Castle, Thunderstorm, approaching sunset," "Abergavenny—clearing up after a shower" (326), "Morning," &c. In this, and the former year also, he began to append long poetical quotations to his works. The first of these quotations seems almost to foreshadow the great features of his future art, it is appended to his picture of "Morning among the Coniston Fells, Cumberland," No. 196 (1798):

> "Ye mists and exhalations! that now rise
> From hill or steaming lake, dusky or grey,
> Till the sun paint your fleecy skirts with gold,
> In honour to the world's great Author, rise:"

For mist and vapour lit by the golden light of morn, or crimsoned with the tints of evening—spread out to veil the distance, or rolled in clouds and storm—are the great characteristics of Turner's art, as contrasted with the mild serenity, the calm unclouded heaven, of Claude. Henceforth, his quotations from the poets are frequent, first from *Thomson's Seasons*, or *Milton's Paradise Lost*, but afterwards strange confused stanzas from some mythical manuscript called "The Fallacies of Hope." This is first quoted in 1812, as illustrative of "The Snow Storm, Hannibal Crossing the Alps," and thenceforth to the end Turner was constant to this MS., for in 1850, the last year in which he exhibited, No. 259, "The Departure of the Fleet," is illustrated with a closing couplet more than usually vague and halting.

> "The Orient moon shone on the departing fleet,
> Nemesis invoked, the priest held the poisoned cup."

No one knows who is the author of this poem, or whether,

indeed, it exists at all; we rather infer that the quotations were manufactured as occasion arose by the painter himself: they are in the strange ambiguous style of his conversation, and his attempts at wit, understood only by himself. In 1839 he exhibited a picture at the British Institution called "The Fountain of Fallacy," and the quotation from the MS. is the acme of turgid ambiguity:—

> "Its rainbow dew diffused fell on each anxious lip,
> Working wild Fantasy, imagining;
> First, Science, in the immeasurable
> Abyss of thought,
> Measured his orbit slumbering."

Certainly if Turner understood this, no one else can, and had his pictures been as unintelligible as his poetry, he would have added little to art.

Bearing in mind the assertions which have been made, that Turner was always misunderstood and underrated by his contemporaries, it may be instructive to notice such early opinions as we meet with. Mr. Peter Cunningham, in his memoir of Turner, thus notices the criticisms of this period. "It was usual, for some years, to publish 'Companions' and 'Guides' to the Exhibitions of the Royal Academy, and from these we learn what his 'Fishermen at Sea' was considered to be like by the critics of the Exhibition of 1796. 'As a sea piece,' says the critic in 'the Companion,' this picture is effective. But the light on the sea is too far extended. The colouring is, however, natural and masterly; and the figures, by not being more distinct and determined, suit the obscure perception of objects dimly seen through the gloom of night, partially illumed.' The author of 'the Critical Guide' for the same year is still more enthu-

'siastic in his comments on the same picture. 'We recommend this piece, which hangs in the ante-room, to the consideration of the judicious; it is managed in a manner somewhat novel, yet the principle of that management is just: we do not hesitate in affirming that this is one of the greatest proofs of an original mind in the present pictorial display; the boats are buoyant and swim well, and the undulation of the element is admirably deceiving.' " Mr. Cunningham adds:—"The leading critic of this early period was Williams, better known as Anthony Pasquin, the terror of artists, both within and without the Academy. Turner, however, was a favourite with him, and in his 'Touchstone to the present Exhibition,' that of 1797, Anthony tells us what he thinks of 'Fishermen Coming Ashore at Sunset, previous to a Gale.' 'We have no knowledge of Mr. Turner,' writes this terror among artists, 'but through the medium of his works, which assuredly reflect great credit upon his endeavours. The present picture is an undeniable proof of the possession of genius and judgment; and, what is uncommon in this age, is, that it partakes but very little of the manner of any other master: he seems to view Nature and her operations with a peculiar vision, and that singularity of perception is so adroit, that it enables him to give a transparency and undulation to the sea, more perfect than is usually seen on canvas. He has a grace and boldness in the disposition of his tints and handling which sweetly deceive the sense; and we are inclined to approve him the more, as all our painters have too servilely followed the steps of each other, and given us pictures much like japanned tea-boards, with ships and boats on a smooth glassy

surface, than adequate representations of that inconstant, boisterous, and ever-changing element.' "

Mr. Caldwell, of Dublin, who was the companion of Athenian Stuart in his travels, has a naïve notice of Turner in his correspondence, printed in Nicholls's *Literary Illustrations*. He says, 14th June, 1802:—"A new artist has started up, one Turner; he had before exhibited stained drawings, he now paints landscapes in oil: beats Loutherbourg and every other artist all to nothing. A painter of my acquaintance, and a good judge, declares his pencil is magic; that it is worth every landscape painter's while to make a pilgrimage to see and study his works. Loutherbourg, that he used to think of so highly, now appears mediocre." The *Literary Panorama*, in 1807, says of "The Smith's Shop"—"This is a truly masterful performance. The artist has produced a breadth, a harmony, and a variety which show that he understands his art thoroughly." Such opinions might be quoted to any extent; but we must add one by Uwins, a brother artist, who in a letter dated 1815, says, in reference to Turner's works then in the Royal Academy exhibition, that he is "the greatest of all living geniuses, whose works this year are said to surpass all his former outdoings;" and one by Leslie, who writes in 1816 to his friends in America, "Turner is my great favourite of all the painters here. He combines the highest poetical imagination with an exquisite feeling for all the truth and individuality of Nature; and he has shown that the ideal, as it is called, is not the improving of Nature, but the selecting and combining objects that are most in harmony and character with each other."

Surely here is enough to show that, even by critics,

Turner was appreciated from the very commencement of his career. His election as associate of the Royal Academy at the very earliest period which, according to the rules, he could be chosen; and, further, his elevation within little more than two years, and when only twenty-six years of age, to full membership, sufficiently prove that his talent and genius were fully appreciated by his brother artists, and received all the honour that their choice could give.

But to return to the period preceding his associateship. Not only did Turner from this time eschew representative landscape and topographical art for that which is far higher and more noble—for a generalized treatment of Nature, avoiding minute details, and looking at his subject as a whole, with all the poetry arising from accidents of storm and sunshine, of driving mist, of early morn or dewy eve—but he actually held as a principle that accurate topographical treatment, mere imitative landscapes, painted as they might in our day be photographed from a given point, embracing all that could be seen from that point, and no more, did not represent the place so fully as a far more general treatment would do: a treatment bringing in, it may be, buildings or objects which from that identical spot were not to be seen, being hidden, perhaps, by nearer objects, or out of the field of the picture—but which from their importance, their magnitude, or their singularity, were especial features of the scene. Thus he would say that no one should paint London without St. Paul's, or Oxford without the dome of the Bodleian; and constantly in his pictures he would move a building of importance considerably to the right or left, to bring it into what he

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considered its best place in the picture. And this is quite consistent with reason, for no one but an artist views a town or any scene from a rigidly fixed point. The eye of an ordinary spectator takes in a series of objects as he moves along some line from which they are seen to the best advantage; as, for instance, the low ground from the range of Richmond Hill, where, as the spectator moves, now this, now that object is blotted out awhile by some nearer one, to reappear and disappear, and again to take its place, perhaps, as the very eye and centre of the scene. Again, we may look upon scenery under some aspects, or at one time of day, and see in it neither feature nor beauty: it may even seem essentially commonplace, from those very details which some would delight in giving so imitatively; but the same scene presents itself, perhaps, in the purple gloom of sunset, massed large and solemnly against a luminous golden sky, and we look with surprise and wonder at its beauty. The true mission of the artist, then, is to seize these golden moments, rare and fleeting—unheeded, perhaps, even in their beauty by common minds—and fix them by his art for ever. What, compared with this, is the merit of building a tree up, leaf by leaf and branch by branch; of drawing, as if by the camera, every nameless house and every crumbling stack of chimneys, brick by brick? What is there in such, even if true as truth itself, that affords us delight?

After he commenced painting in oil, Turner for some time continued in his exhibition pictures, chiefly to use that medium. We do not find him all at once striking out a new art for himself, but rather walking reverently in the old paths and deferential to old authorities. Many

of his earliest works, and of these some of his best, are founded on the Dutch School: as, for instance, the noble picture of "The Shipwreck," painted in 1805 (National Gallery, No. 476), and "The Sun rising in Mist," painted in 1807 (National Gallery, No. 479); while in the same collection may be seen imitations of Poussin, as in "The Tenth Plague," 1802 (National Gallery, No. 470), and in "The Goddess of Discord choosing the Apple of Contention in the Garden of the Hesperides," 1806 (No. 477), in which even the figures are borrowed from that painter; as in No. 479 they are, with but slight alteration, from Teniers. Wilson, again, is palpably imitated in many of his pictures: thus in "Æneas with the Sybil, Lake Avernus," No. 463, and "A View in Wales," No. 466, both painted in 1800; and Claude, notably, in very many of his works. Indeed, Turner evidently felt a strong spirit of rivalry with Claude, and a desire to measure himself, and be measured by the world, in comparison with the great French landscape painter; as he proved by the special bequest of two of his works to hang between two of the best Claudes in the National Gallery, where they have since been placed. Even the figure painters were not beyond his imitative rivalry; as in "The Holy Family and St. Joseph," painted in 1813, No. 473, "The Harvest Home," No. 562, and "The Blacksmith's Shop," No. 478, painted in 1807.

This latter picture is curious, as showing how ready our painter was to match himself against any aspirant for fame. The year before, 1806, "The Village Politicians," the work of Wilkie, then only in his twenty-second year, was exhibited in the Royal Academy, attracted general attention, and was highly praised. Turner painted "The

Blacksmith's Shop," evidently in direct imitation of the manner and characteristics of the young artist who had so suddenly taken rank before the public, and the work was exhibited the same year with "The Blind Fiddler," the second picture that Wilkie painted in the metropolis. Mr. Wornum, in his *Catalogue*, very properly notices this, and, in a note to No. 478, says—"This picture, so different from Turner's usual works, is said to have been painted in consequence of the very great praise awarded to Wilkie's 'Village Politicians,' exhibited at the Academy in the previous year." Now, even if this were done with an envious feeling on the part of Turner, and not in a spirit of generous rivalry—rivalry, be it remembered, wherein the younger man, fighting as he did on his own ground, must at least have had many advantages in his favour, and was much more likely to be victorious than to suffer defeat—it at least gives no ground for the insinuations against both Turner and the Royal Academy which are contained in the *Life of Wilkie*, by his countryman, Allan Cunningham, who mistakes the whole affair; shifting the contention to a time and place wherein Turner would have it all his own way, and be able to give his competitor a blow without the chance of receiving one in return.

Mr. Cunningham's version of the story is as follows:—"Now, those who imagine that the Royal Academy is wholly composed of high-minded men of genius, who are not only generous by nature, and free from envy, but proclaimed 'Esquires' by letters patent, are really gentlemen one and all, can know but little of human nature, and less of bodies corporate. The fame of Wilkie, which was almost on every lip, was not heard, it is said, without

'a' leaven of bad feeling on the part of some of the members whose genius ought to have raised them above such meanness, and whose works, being in a far different line of art, were fairly out of the embittering influence of rivalry. We know not how this was of our own knowledge, but we know that in arranging the pictures on the walls of the exhibition-rooms, an envious academician can make one fine picture injure the effect of another by a *startling opposition of colour*, while a generous academician can place the whole so as to avoid this cross-fire of colours, and maintain the harmony which we look for in galleries of art. When the doors of the Exhibition were opened in 1807, while painters, as usual complained; some of pictures being hung in an unsuitable place, and others of works placed in injurious lights; the public were not slow in observing that 'The Blind Fiddler,' with its staid and modest colour, was *flung into eclipse* by the *unmitigated splendour* of a neighbouring picture, hung, for that purpose, as some averred, beside it, and painted into its *overpowering brightness*, as others more bitterly said, in the *varnishing* time, which belongs to academicians, between the day when the pictures are sent in and that on which the Exhibition opens. There must be some mistake, we trust, in this; the arrangement, of which we know complaints were openly made, must have been accidental, for who can believe that a studied attempt could be made to push back into darkness a youthful spirit struggling into light, or that an able artist could not but know that he might as well try to keep the sun from rising, as a genius such as Wilkie's from shining? If such a thing occurred, Wilkie was amply avenged in the praises of his picture, which were too loud to

permit even the voice to be heard which averred that his drawing was not in the academic style of art, and that his colouring was too subdued and cold. The human nature which he had stamped on the whole scene triumphed over all; the pictures of the academicians in the same room, with all their scientific drawing and glow, failed to attract. The visitors crowded to 'The Blind Fiddler;' and 'Jupiter presenting to Diana her Bow and Arrows,' 'Flora Unveiled by the Zephyrs,' nay, even '*The Sun Rising through Vapour*,' or '*The Blacksmith's Forge*,' were disregarded in comparison."

We might doubt to whom this tirade and these sarcastic insinuations refer—whether to Westall and Rigaud, the painters of the two first-named works; named only because they follow in the sequence of number—or to the painter of the two last. But Cunningham's son, in his memoir of Turner (p. 24), complements the information given by his father, and says, that in 1807 Turner "painted and exhibited 'The Sun Rising through Mists,' 'Fishermen Cleaning and Selling Fish' (No. 162), and, *more extraordinary still*, 'A Country Blacksmith disputing upon the price of Iron and the price charged to the Butcher for shoeing his Pony' (135), two pictures which killed every picture within range of their effects. Oddly enough, a modest picture thus injured by being hung between two fires, was 'The Blind Fiddler,' then the second picture of a lad raw from Scotland, contriving to exist, without getting into debt, on eighteen shillings a week. On the varnishing day, set apart for the privileged body to which he belonged, Turner, it is said, reddened his sun, and blew the bellows of his art on his 'Blacksmith's Forge,' to put the Scotchman's nose out

of joint, who had gained such reputation by his 'Village Politicians:' the story is told without naming Turner, in A. Cunningham's 'Life of Wilkie,' and condemned as an untruth by the reviewer of the 'Life' in the *Quarterly Review*. But there is no doubt of the truth of the story, and that Wilkie remembered the circumstance with some acerbity, though he never resented it openly. I can undertake to say, when 'The Forge' was sold at Lord De Tabley's sale, Wilkie was in Italy, and Collins the painter, in describing the sale to him, in a MS. letter now before me, adds, 'and there was *your old enemy* 'The Forge.'"

Now it is to be observed that the elder Cunningham does not ground his charge against Turner upon his having painted a picture in imitation of the style of Wilkie, which he really did; but abuses the Royal Academy, the "Esquires by Letters Patent," for having intentionally injured the young painter by hanging in juxtaposition with his picture, one "startlingly opposed to it in colour," and calculated, by its "unmitigated splendour," to fling it into eclipse; and he insinuates that Turner, during the varnishing time, painted this work into "overpowering brightness," to the further injury of the rising artist. As the younger Cunningham explains:—"Reddening his sun, and blowing the bellows of his art on the blacksmith's forge, to put the Scotchman's nose out of joint." Fortunately for justice, all the three pictures are now national property, and the truth of the charge can easily be tested, not only by the connoisseur, but by the intelligent public. It is almost needless to say that the first of the two pictures—"The Sun Rising through Mist"—hung too far away from that of Wilkie in the 1807

Exhibition to do it any injury; they were many numbers, almost the side of the room, apart. But any one who will take the trouble to look at the picture, will see but little of the "unmitigated splendour" alluded to: will see that it is really a *grey* picture, and that the sun, so far from being "reddened," is of the palest yellow, really rising through a grey haze or mist, as the title implies; so that we may at once take up the charge as against the Blacksmith's forge only. Now, strange to say, this too, instead of being a work "startlingly opposed in colour" to that of Wilkie, is painted imitatively in the grey tones of the latter: instead of a red and blazing forge, as we might expect, a burst of grey smoke, and the palest of yellow flames, is all that the bellows of Turner's art has blown on this occasion, and every one will see that the colour of Wilkie's work is of the two the most "overpowering;" the only red in Turner's picture —the cap of the butcher—being far less in quantity than that of the fiddler, carried out as it is by the red waistcoat of the delighted peasant playing with his child. Why, then, did Collins speak of "your old enemy the forge?" Certainly not because it was so different from Wilkie's work that the latter had been injured by its neighbourhood; but more probably because it was so like, and showed by its dashing bravura in painting, how easy such art is, and how easy it is to give the appearance of finish, without the labour that the younger painter had bestowed,—how easy to imitate this style that had so suddenly risen into fame.

Then as to the Academy, surely it is strange that the world is led to believe that each rising artist has, through much tribulation, and by ways little short of torture and

martyrdom, to enter into that paradise; yet that no sooner are they safe in the haven of rest, than in their turn they also become tormentors and persecutors. Here was Turner, whose talents one great critic asserts were unknown to the Academy, or at least unappreciated, until in his old age, they were set forth in the writer's own eulogies,—and Wilkie, against whose progress another critic asserts the members of that body were unjustly conspiring. Yet, strange to say, both were elected associates at twenty-four, and full members of the body at the advanced age of twenty-six, and, of course, immediately became in their turn oppressors and conspirators.

But we are led aside by these questions. We have seen that Turner's art, however far it might advance, had hitherto been based on old examples, and followed the precedent of his great predecessors. While he was painting for the walls of the Exhibition those noble works, which *we* at least are inclined to think, with one or two exceptions, his best, and the period during which he produced them (viz., from 1800 to 1820), his best time, he was diligently labouring at the new art of water-colour painting; very rarely exhibiting the works in this medium publicly, but mostly preparing them for the engravers. This practice seems to have led him to a perfectly new view of his art. Water-colour, depending for its lights on the purity and whiteness of its ground, and susceptible of the most infinitesimal gradations of tint and colour by mere dilutions of the pigments with water, has, so far, a wider range than oil is capable of, wherein the tints, when painted solidly—as all the lights must almost of necessity be—are gradated by mixing

the coloured pigments with white; this admits of far fewer gradations in scale, and has, moreover, the evil of altering somewhat the nature of the colour by such admixture, making the tint produced in a degree absorbent of light, and far less brilliant than in its transparent state by mere dilution. It is true that by glazing the colour over a light ground, some of the advantages of water-colour are obtained, and some even in a higher degree than in that medium; such as increased depth, brilliancy, and force, far greater from the unctuous richness of oil than in water-colour. But even thus treated, the gradations are far less delicate, from the fluidity of the medium being less; while from there being a sensible colour in all oily media which tinges or tarnishes the delicate tints, the use of oil in this manner is almost precluded.

Turner, in his water-colour art, was led insensibly into these refined gradations; by them he sought detail with great breadth, and managed to give at least the appearance of the multitudinous details of mountain range or extended plain, the effects of air and light, and the mists that are ever floating in our island atmosphere, —a manner that no one had thought of before him, much less accomplished; and this manner he sought to carry out in his oil pictures also. His water-colour practice led him to the use of the white ground. He soon perceived the far greater luminousness thus to be obtained; that works so treated, when seen in a room, had as it were light in themselves, and appeared as if the spectator were looking forth into the open air, as compared with the solid paintiness of the works of his contemporaries. But how to use his colour in sufficiently delicate gradations to achieve the same result on a light

'ground in oil, as on the paper ground in water-colours, was one of his first difficulties; and he was led to adopt the use of scumbling, that is to say, of driving very thin films of white, or of colour mixed with white, over a properly prepared ground. By this means he not only obtained infinitely delicate gradations, but successfully imitated the effects of air and mist; the brighter tints beneath being rendered greyer and more distant at the same time by the film of white. This enabled him to make the points of the composition—his figures, or other coloured objects in the foreground—stand out in extreme brilliancy, from the use of transparent colour boldly and purely used over the white.

By these means Turner obtained the whole range of the scale, from white—to him the intensest representative of light—to the purest reds, oranges, blues, purples, &c., that the use of the transparent pigments in oil permitted. Or by a black object, such as a black hat, a dog, or a cow, the extreme range of his palette from light to dark. Thus he abandoned the old maxim of art—that a painter should reserve his palette, and always have something to enhance the black, the white, or the colour of his picture—and expended all the force of his pigments so as to realize the utmost brilliancy possible.

This change in Turner's art became manifest about the year 1820. This year was a year of transition; after it we find his execution, as well as the principles on which he wrought, entirely changed, from the solid character of his first manner. For the sake of comparison, take the "Shipwreck," (No. 476), painted in 1805, and "The Bay of Baiæ," "Apollo and the Sybil" (No. 505), painted in 1823, wherein the transition to the water-

colour system is complete. In the former, the principle is dark, with a very limited proportion of light; in the latter, light with a very limited proportion of dark. Again in the former the work throughout is painted solidly, and with a vigorous and full brush: the sky is solid, the sea is solid and opaque in its execution, even in the darks much of it laid on boldly with the knife. With the single exception of the red jacket of the man at the helm, the few patches of colour that break the solemn monotony of the storm are not glazed, but mixed as opaque tints. Though the scheme of the picture has relation to the Dutch School, it is not Dutch, either in execution or finish, but simple, massive, and large. In "The Bay of Baiæ," on the contrary, the whole scheme of the picture is light: instead of the keeping being the result of contrasts of different planes, it consists of infinite gradations of delicate tint; the hills and distant bay are scumbled into a misty haze; the foreground has been painted white, or in a very light hue, and broken up into delicate tints, finished with refined diaphanous glazings of colour. The weedage, leafage, and flowers have been painted white, or approaching to it, and have their gorgeous hues given by glazing with colour unmixed with white. The shadows and the principal darks of the foreground were liquid and dark, with the brown amber of rich asphaltum. Were! yes, alas, were! for the picture is now but a wreck of what it was. In 1823, when it hung on the walls of the Royal Academy, we well recollect it a vision of glorious beauty. Now Time has worked its evil will upon it, aided by the neglect of its author, the system of painting he adopted, and the treacherous pigment used for the darks. The aërial blue

of the far-off bay and the hills that marge its shores, are here and there dark with discoloured patches; the middle distance has been tampered with, the hand of the restorer is visible. The bright hues on the foliage and flowers of the foreground have proved as evanescent as the things they represent, the crimson drapery of Apollo hangs like a rent and faded rag, and the darks, strengthened with asphalte, are cracked and blackened as if the breath of a furnace had passed over them. Wonderful tints here and there speak to the eye, as rare music does to the ear, showing through the faded glazings with which they were once enriched, like the hues of life lingering on the face of death; it is but the wreck, the beautiful wreck it is true, of a picture that is past.

Burnet, whose critical remarks on Turner's works are usually sound and well considered, has shown us how contemporary art was affected by this change of principle in Turner. He says (*Turner and his Works*, p. 61), "The light key upon which most of our present landscape painters work, owes its origin to Turner; the presence of his pictures on the walls of the Academy engendered this change from the darker imitations of Wilson and Gainsborough, or the contemplation of the landscapes of the Dutch School; light pictures certainly attract more attention than dark, but the question is, how far this style may be carried with safety; in the opinion of many, the English School are extending this principle to excess. Wilkie used to relate an anecdote, that while he was one of the hangers of the pictures, he carried a copy of 'The Woman taken in Adultery,' by Rembrandt, and put it up amongst the works on the walls of the Academy; there was a general shout of triumph in favour of lights—one

cried out 'Away with the black masters!' another said, 'It looks like a hole in the wall;' but after listening to their congratulations in praise of their own style, Wilkie quietly observed, 'If we are on the right road, then the greatest masters of the Italian and British Schools have all been wrong.'"

We also know that Wilkie, on his return from Italy, complained that the English works were, to his eyes, painted up in the darks, but left flat in the lights, that is, looking thin and poor. We well remember ourselves the effect of the British pictures when hung in the same building with the works of the French School at the Paris Exhibition, in 1855. They had generally an appearance of chalkiness that had never struck us until we saw them thus juxtaposed, for the French paint lower in tone than we do even in their landscapes, and always seem to reserve their palette, so as to retain both white and colour more intense than is found in the picture, to enable them to emphasize and give focussing points to their works; while our artists seem lavish of the full power of the palette, and to leave nothing beyond for that little more light, which, according to the well-known painter's paradox, may serve to make the picture darker and richer—that brighter pigment which is to neutralize any too prevailing colour; or that still darker touch which is to take out the dark from a picture, and give it clearness. Such, however, was no longer the art of Turner in the new manner he adopted, and continued until he ended his labour with his life. Perhaps this style reached its climax in the picture of "Phryne as Venus going to the Baths," painted in 1838, (No. 522).

"This picture represents a wide extended country under the intense blaze of noonday light, compacted of all the mystery of broken tints, of scumblings, and of diaphanous glazings, of intense contrasts of colour and white, of hot and cold, of breadth of light opposed to small points of extreme dark. The distance is full of details, a rich country of woods and temples sleeping in the sun, all perfectly in keeping; in the foreground, a crowd of figures accompany the half-draped beauty; the flesh of the faces is intensely white in the sun's blaze, the dresses are the crimson and purple silks of the East; across the foreground is thrown a flood of prismatic rays, almost startling; it seems as if there were a real sun-ray in the picture, and all this obtained almost in the absence of darks: the picture is as light as one of his own water-colours, this one, at least, retaining its brilliancy, having been less injured than most of those which remained on the neglected walls of his own studio. Soon after this picture, Turner's art began visibly to decline; he pushed his principle of broken tints, of intense light confusing and commingling the forms, to its utmost extreme; and some of the last works of his hand, while the artist may regard them with wonder not unmixed with admiration at what they suggest, must ever be but caviare to the multitude.

To us one of Turner's most poetical works is the "Ulysses deriding Polyphemus," which he exhibited in 1829, with the following quotation from Pope's Odyssey:—

> "Now off at sea, and from the shallows clear,
> As far as human voice could reach the ear;
> With taunts the distant giant I accost,
> Hear me, O Cyclop! hear, ungracious host!
> 'Twas on no coward, no ignoble slave,
> Thou meditat'st thy meal in yonder cave.

Cyclop! if any, pitying thy disgrace,
Ask who disfigured thus that eyeless face?
Say, 'twas Ulysses, 'twas his deed declare—
Laertes' son, of Ithaca the fair,
Ulysses, far in fighting fields renown'd,
Before whose arm Troy tumbled to the ground.

Thus I: while raging he repeats his cries,
With hands uplifted to the starry skies."

Far in the East the morning is breaking, the horses of the chariot of the sun spring wildly upwards with the "car of day," the luminary is just rising above the blue hills that bound the ocean's shore, flinging a fan of radiant beams up the vault of heaven, whose arch is underhung with fleecy clouds. Here and there are openings into the far blue depths beyond, and flitting like birds with golden plumage athwart the space, are severed cloudlets tipped with the gold and purple hues of morn. On the other side of the picture, the gilded galley in which the hero and his friends escape, is just standing out of a dark cove in the mountain chain. Ulysses is on the poop with hands uplifted, shouting derisively to the blinded giant, while his companions, thickly clustered on mast and yard, unfurl in haste the vast sails, and one by one the red oars are thrust forth from the vessel's burnished sides, ready to sweep away from the inhospitable shore, and out of reach of the missiles the monster may hurl after them. The undulating sea, dyed by the rising sun to golden green, reflects on its burnished waves the galley with its flags and pennons, the brawny sailors and the creamy sails. The nymphs of the ocean sympathize with the island hero, and gambol round the vessel's prow, while shoals of flying fish herald his way from the dangerous shore. On the

beach he has left the fires still burning in which the sharpened stake was heated, and far above, on a steep promontory of rock, the wounded monster, dimly seen, large in the purple mists of morn, "lies many a rood," bellowing and writhing in his anguish, so that the ravines echo to his groans. The snowy mountains, whose tops are mingled with the amber sky, shake with the sound and roll their avalanches to the plains below.

It is impossible to go beyond the power of colour here achieved; it is on the very verge of extravagance, but yet is no way gaudy. How near it is, is seen in any attempt to copy the picture; such copies are more surely failures than those from any other of the painter's works. The mere handling is a marvel, the ease and freedom of the work, the thick impasto of tints that are heaped on the upper sky, making the lower parts recede in true perspective to the rising sun; the grand way in which the vessel moves over the "watery floor," the dream-like poetry of the whole, make up a picture without a parallel in the world of art. Or, look at his "Shipwreck" (No. 476), 1805, a work whose characteristics are of the Dutch School, but in which the theme is so treated as to speak by its terrible poetry to all, but more especially to English, minds. The heaving and boiling sea, torn by the winds, is mingled with the black heavens all along what might be the horizon: the foam from the crests of the broken waves is driven like a snow-wreath across the dark overhanging thunder-cloud; yonder, almost hidden by the mist and smoky drift of the torn waves, the doomed vessel lies tost and helpless, the hopeless seamen dropping from hull and bowsprit into the swamping boats. In the foreground, lit up by a fitful gleam,

are other boats hasting to aid the drowning crew; one is almost engulphed in the boiling surge; in the other, the mariners strain hard at the helm to steer clear of their companion. Terror is on every face.

Turner as an artist was quite aware of the greatness of his own powers, and jealous of their proper recognition; many indications of this feeling will occur to those who read his life. It was this, and not any want of appreciation of the great French painter, that made him so desirous of measuring himself with Claude, whom the cognoscenti of the day placed on a pinnacle of glory, to which they deemed it impossible for a modern, and more especially for an Englishman, to aspire. It was this induced him to bequeath two of his works to the National Gallery, coupled with a condition that they should be hung side by side with the finest pictures of that classic painter; and it seems to us that in the choice he made he selected subjects which might be compared with those of Claude, rather than those which by their imaginative qualities would place the modern far above the old master; and that, if Turner may be considered as second in this contest, we have but to recur to such noble epics as the "Polyphemus," the "Shipwreck," and a host of others, to find a field in which he is without a competitor.

Even in the comparison he has chosen to institute there are many points wherein he is quite equal to his rival, many in which he is decidedly superior; let us stand before the pictures and compare the "Carthage" and the "Embarkation of the Queen of Sheba." There can be no doubt that Turner's composition is the richest and the most elegant; the eye is led gradually into the

picture from the foreground to the extremest distance, while Claude in comparison seems hard and like the *set-scenes* of a theatre, cut out into one, two, three, distances. The perspective of the water is better in Turner, the heaving roll of the Mediterranean wave better in Claude. In Turner the rocky height on the left, the foliage and the sky near it, are fine; the whole of that side being misty, intricate, and mysterious; the colour of the sky round the sun has failed, but in its first glow it must have been beautiful indeed; Claude's may have been warmer, and has the advantage that it has stood. Claude's figures are badly drawn, but there is a mist and air about those in the foreground, and they seem bathed in the sunlight around them, while Turner's are painty, wooden, and wanting in the atmosphere that befits their place in the picture. The grand mystery of the ship-building in the middle distance, however, is far before anything in Claude, whose imaginative qualities were below those of Turner. As a whole the "Embarkation" is spotty, liney, and hard, and looks vacant and empty beside the "Carthage." Although something must be allowed for the clear atmosphere of Italy; its very clearness is against it, the boats seem less a part of the work than placed to fill up void spaces. Turner's is more rich as a composition, more graceful, and the parts more united, but it fails in execution, and is somewhat lumpy and heavy.

In person Turner had little of the outward appearance that we love to attribute to the possessors of genius. In the last twenty years of his life, during which we knew him well, his short figure had become corpulent—his face, perhaps from continual exposure to the air, was

unusually red, and a little inclined to blotches. His dark eye was bright and restless—his nose, aquiline. He generally wore what is called a black dress coat, which would have been the better for brushing—the sleeves were mostly too long, coming down over his fat and not over clean hands. He wore his hat while painting on the varnishing days—or otherwise a large wrapper over his head, while on the warmest days he generally had another wrapper or comforter round his throat—though occasionally he would unloose it and allow the two ends to dangle down in front and pick up a little of the colour from his ample palette. This, together with his ruddy face, his rollicking eye, and his continuous, although, except to himself, unintelligible jokes, gave him the appearance of one of that now nearly extinct race—a long-stage coachman. In the schools his eyes seemed ever in motion, and instantly to spy out any student who was sketching his portrait—which we were all anxious to do on the margin of our drawings, but out of many attempts none succeeded, for he knew, as if by intuition, when any one had his eye on him for this purpose, and would change his posture so as to preclude the chance of its being finished. Thus stolen likenesses of him are rare. On the varnishing days he was generally one of the earliest to arrive, coming down to the Academy before breakfast and continuing his labours as long as daylight lasted; strange and wonderful was the transformation he at times effected in his works on the walls. Latterly he used to send them in in a most unfinished state, relying on what he could do for them during the three days allowed to the members—and so much did he value this opportunity, and the fellowship of that period,

that it is certain the varnishing days would never have been done away with while Turner lived.

Soon after Turner's death the "varnishing days" were, however, abandoned for a time, and only reinstated in 1862. It had been found in the interim that Turner was right in the value he placed on these days of meeting. The English School is constituted on the system of individual independence; each artist after having learnt the mere technical elements, the handicraft of his art, practises it almost irrespective of the rules and traditions of his predecessors. In England, the atelier system of the Continent—a system where the pupil enters upon all the knowledge of his master, and follows all the traditions of the school—is all but unknown; while even our Academic system leaves the student, after he has obtained a command of the language of his art, quite free as to his mode of using it, and has the merit of forming artists of varied originality, because untrammelled by rules and systems; if it has also the fault of leaving the rising body ignorant of any general code of law or precedent to guide them in their practice.

Now on the "varnishing days," when painting was going on in common, much of precept, much of practice, and much of common experience, were interchanged. The younger members gained much from the elder ones, and many useful hints and suggestions from one another. Who does not recollect the valuable remarks of Wilkie, Etty, Leslie, Constable, and Mulready, and, above all, of Turner? though from him, as has been already seen, it was conveyed in dark hints and ambiguous phrases. A little anecdote, which happened to one of the writers, on his first admission to the privilege of these meetings, and

must be told with the singular pronoun, will illustrate what has been said; at the same time it is quite characteristic of Turner, and of his keen perception of what a picture required to set right an apparent defect, and is on both accounts well worth insertion here. "The first varnishing days at the Royal Academy to which I was admitted on my election as associate, I was trying to *spoil* my picture of 'The Castle Builder,' when Howard came up to me and said, in his most frigid manner, 'that the bosom of my figure was indelicately naked, and that some of the members thought I had better paint the dress higher.' Here was a dilemma for a new associate. Of course, with due meekness, I was about to comply with his advice, although greatly against the grain, and with a sort of wonder at myself that I could possibly have been ignorantly guilty of sending an immodest contribution to the Exhibition. Meanwhile, Turner looked over my shoulder, and, in his usual sententious manner, mumbled out, 'what-r-doing?' I told him the rebuke I had just received from the secretary. 'Pooh, pooh,' said he, 'paint it lower.' I thought he was intent upon leading me into a scrape. 'You want white,' he added, and turned on his heel. What could he mean? I pondered over his words, and after a while the truth struck me. The coloured dress came harshly on the flesh, and no linen intervened. I painted at once, over a portion of the bosom of the *dress*, a peep of the chemise. Howard came round soon after, and said, with a little more warmth, 'Ah! you have covered it up—it is far better now—it will do.' It was no higher however; there was just as much of the flesh seen, but the sense of nakedness and display was gone. Turner also came round

again, and gave his gratified grunt at my docility and apprehensiveness, which he often rewarded afterwards by like hints. Now this was not a mere incidental change, but it was a truth, always available in the future, the value of linen near the flesh—a hint I never forgot, and continually found useful. Many such have I heard and seen him give to his brother landscape painters—either by word of mouth or with a dash of his brush; and it is a great satisfaction to all that by a fair compromise with the other exhibitors, the Academy has again partially restored the varnishing days, and that members can again interchange opinions and advice with one another."

But we resume. Hitherto Turner has been spoken of principally as an oil painter, and this art has furnished most of our illustrations of his methods and practice. Yet as a water-colour painter, he is, perhaps, even more eminent. It has already been said that his treatment of oil was greatly influenced by his practice in water-colour, and that his success, or the novelty of the results, influenced the whole art of the period, introducing a lighter and brighter scale of painting than had heretofore prevailed. His influence on the growing school of water-colour was treated of in a former chapter; but it is impossible to conclude our notice of Turner and his art, without some more definite account of his works in water-colour. Perhaps, it is not too much to say, that he shows even as a greater artist in these works, than in those painted in the nobler medium. In oil he had the body of ancient art before him, and great masters of execution in almost every varied style. There was, for his choice and study, early Flemish art, with its clear and precise manipulation, its jewel-like brightness and rich

transparency. The minute and exquisite finish, joined in some cases with the most facile handling of the Dutch School. The broad and fluent manner of the school of Rubens. The Venetian with its gorgeous colour and its textural treatment of surface in every variety of rich material. The drier, but severe dignity of execution of the other Italian schools, or the varieties of the Spanish and French methods for him to adopt or to modify; but in water-colour, what was there in the beginning to guide him—what had he to adopt—what to improve upon? The art all but began with him; weak and feeble, in its very childhood as to executive means, hardly a resource had been invented by which to express the wonderful qualities which Nature presents to the artist's eye, and which Turner, more especially, was gifted to perceive. Nature revealed to him a flood of atmospheric light, a world of infinitely tender gradations of tint and colour, gradations so minute as to be almost unappreciable by other men, and such as it seemed hopeless to realize by the practice which then prevailed; he had, therefore, to invent his own methods.

Turner soon found that an untrue heaviness resulted from the old process of diluting or strengthening a grey tint and treating every part, first as a mere gradation of light and dark, afterwards tinting with colour, thus to represent the hue of the object in the lights, and by passing the same tint over the shadowed ground, the hue as affected or changed by shade. He proceeded, therefore, to view every object and part of an object, the whole surface of his picture, as *colour;* the local colour modified and often absolutely changed by light or the absence of light, by atmo-

sphere, reflection, or distance, but each portion still looked at for its own *colour*; and then, resorting to the pigments which, either separately or mixed, would represent that colour, to execute the tint or hue at once on the paper. This was a great advance in the true direction, but here was another danger to be avoided, muddiness of tint, and loss of the translucency from the white ground; partly from the imperfection of the pigments, and partly from the needful repetitions of the washes. Hence arose delicate hatchings and stipplings, which in his hands achieved wonderful qualities of broken hues, air tints and atmosphere; and various modes of removing from the surface any overloaded parts. All these, with numerous other resources, were, if not invented by him, applied so judiciously, and with such consummate manipulative skill, that we never for a moment are led to a consideration of the process by which the effect is produced, being so fully satisfied with the truth of the impression it imparts. Water-colour seemed to lend itself readily to the imitation of those effects in nature he so much loved to represent—nature lost in a blaze of light rather than dimmed with a twilight gloom—and thus it happens that his works in this medium mostly embody some evanescent effect, be it flood of sunshine bursting forth after storms, or careering in gleams over the plain, the mountain, or the sea; or some wrack of clouds, some passing shower or rainbow of promise refreshing the gladdened and glistening earth.

Turner's water-colour paintings, indeed, epitomize the whole mystery of landscape art. Other painters have arrived at excellence in one treatment of Nature. Thus, Cozens in grand and solemn effects of mountain

scenery; Robson, in simple breadth and masses; Dewint, in tone and colour; Glover in sun-gleams thrown across the picture, and tipping with golden light the hills and trees; Cox, in his breezy freshness; and Barret, in his classical compositions, lighted by the setting sun. These were men that played in one key, often making the rarest melody. But Turner's art compassed all they did collectively, and more than equalled each in his own way. Compare any sunset of Barret's with the "Tivoli" of Turner; see how the latter runs through endless gradations of tints and colour, and yet exhausts only half the means at his command: for there is neither black nor any approach to it in his picture, and the mysteries of colour are so subtle and so true, that Barret's work almost looks like a painting in monotone beside it. Alas, the "Tivoli" is faded from its first glory! but even so faded, what an appreciation of its priceless art was given in its purchase at Mr. Allnutt's sale in 1863, for 1,800 guineas. Again, if we have seen one Barret, we seem to have seen all; the same scale of colour, the same principles of composition, the same gradations. Not so with Turner: place the "Tivoli" beside the "Chryses Worshipping the Setting Sun." The composition is wholly different; the broken misty tints of the "Tivoli" are replaced by the broad, washed masses of the Chryses. Yet both are sunsets—both are beautiful—but very different; and if we take twenty sunsets by the master, we shall find each with its own characteristics, each with some new phase of cloud or mist, cold and silvery, or hot and glowing, as the varied atmospheric conditions require. Barret's sunsets were wrought by simple gradations of rather negative colour, fading away from the

olive green of the foreground into the haze of warm yellow light around the sun. Turner, on the contrary, revelled in brilliant warmth, and fully appreciated the value of hot and cold colours in opposition. He had thoroughly studied Nature, and well knew that it was not by light and dark that the truths of sunset effects are achieved, but by the opposition of warm lights and cold shadows, hardly distinguishable in scale of light and dark, but the cold colour telling as shadow by contrast with the hot light. Every exact observer of Nature must have seen the startling blueness of the shadows even upon hot sandy roads when the sun is low and near the horizon, and following this, Turner, with hardly an absolute dark, obtained the true effect of sunset we have described in the "Tivoli." If we look into any mass of tint in Barret's picture we shall find it so far homogeneous that it consists of mere gradations of the same monotonous hue; but any mass of colour in Turner's pictures is an aggregation of an infinite number of tints, forming by their broken union the richest and most aërial hues. Let any one examine the picture of "Hornby Castle," in the Sheepshanks' Collection, and he will at once appreciate this remark; the work alluded to being named, as has been before stated, simply because it is accessible. Far better illustrations would be afforded by many of his other works. Even Cox, who has great variety in the tints he washes on, and thereby gives greatly the effect of air in his works, is tinty when compared with Turner.

It had been almost a dogma in art that the darkest colour of a picture must, in open-air subjects, be in the foreground. But Turner, by his knowledge in the appli-

cation of hot and cold colours could place his dark in the distance, and yet be true, although the foreground was glowing with golden sunlight. Thus in the "Heidelberg" (which was in the International Exhibition, 1862), a few small touches of warm dark in the foreground are all that counterbalance a mass of blue dark in the distance.

Turner began in water-colours, as he did in oil, by imitating the art of his predecessors and contemporaries. In many of his early works the inspiration is evidently caught from Cozens. Other works suggest the low tones and broad manner of Girtin, as the "Warkworth" and the "Easby Abbey:" perhaps the golden manner which the latter painter adopted just before he died, led to Turner's rich and golden tones; but if so, he speedily surpassed his early competitor, and began to range over the novel and hitherto untrodden field of fleeting effects, such as painters term accidental; his readiness and boldness in seizing these is as remarkable, as is the fearlessness with which he pushed them to the very verge of truth. Thus the wonderful contrasts in which he at times indulges, bringing some prominent building, tower, or spire off a dark storm-sky, by lighting it with the full glare of the sun just burst forth from the pall of clouds, as in the "Stamford," where the streets glittering and splashy with the shower just passing off, reflect the greys of the thunder-clouds and give increased brilliancy to the gleam thrown on the tower. "Malvern Abbey and Gateway" is another rather more subdued instance of the same treatment; but his works supply a host of such examples: sometimes, as in these, the light is thrown on a principal building, sometimes the last glories of the

setting sun light up with ruddy hues the moorland hill-side, and contrast it with the iron-grey of the rising storm. He was among the first to adopt this startling "accident," and he revelled in displaying his genius in such treatments.

In the last decade of Turner's life a party of young artists, repudiating all the old laws and rules of art, determined to regulate their practice by two dogmas—one being the literal and direct imitation of the individual details of Nature; the other, that as every part of Nature is equally beautiful, all should be taken without selection. It is not the intention here to enter upon the mixed good and evil arising from such principles; but as an endeavour has been made to prove that Turner's art was founded upon like principles with theirs, and a world of ingenious sophistry has been written to support the assertion, it is necessary to allude to it. It would rather seem that the least consideration of his art and practice would prove the very reverse. He repudiated the *mere* imitation of Nature, and never cared to represent her commonplace aspects: those, indeed, which from their abiding, are the only aspects which can be *literally* copied. Although he made hundreds of studies from Nature, he never seems to have painted a picture out of doors. He cared only to reproduce those varied effects which are fleeting as they are beautiful—like the passions which flit across the human countenance, and can raise the most commonplace and stolid face into the region of poetry, or those expressions which, whether on face of man or the wide-spread champagne, pass as suddenly as they arise, and can only be reproduced by the hand of genius, working with the stores of a schooled

memory, enriched by the treasures of long and patient study.

Moreover, Turner's art was completely an art of selection: of selection as to time and circumstance, as to effect of light, shade, or colour; of selection by omission or addition of parts. Of what are called views, he painted few or none in oil; and those in water-colours, which are illustrations of scenes and places, are so idealized by the poetry of effect—by the time of day chosen, by the adoption of a treatment forcing into prominence the principal object (as in the impressive drawing of "Norham Castle," on the Tweed), by the accessories of cattle or figures, of incidents of life and action—as entirely to remove them from imitative realizations of scenes or places.

If we look even to his foregrounds, where, if anywhere, the details of Nature would be imitatively rendered, we find no such attempt on his part. Even there he sought to give the impression of foliage, flowers, and fruit, rather than to render them imitatively. We recognize, it is true, some of the typical plants, the leading growths, such as the vine hanging from branch to branch, or the gourd trailing over fallen column or sculptured stone, rendered, it may be, with the utmost truth of *general* effect and of relation to the tone of the picture, whether of grey storm or of golden sunlight. Still never rendered with any curious perception of minute beauties arising from direct individual imitation, but rather with relation to the masses of light and dark in his picture, or to the forms he wished to emphasize or to hide.

If Turner had a defect it was too great generalization; and, as our defects grow upon us in our old age,

his latter works in oil seem rather schemes for pictures—the bold and startling laying on of masses preparatory to future completion—than attempts at any detailed realization. In many of them we try in vain to make out the minor forms in the masses. It seemed sufficient for the painter that the great truths of sun and shade, of hot and cold were faithfully rendered, and then—did we not know his perfect manipulation in water-colours even late in life—we might think that either his eye failed him, or that the will was wanting to cope with the tedious labour of completing the parts whilst maintaining the requisite breadth. The pallet knife, the broad hog-tool for scumbling the broken surface, were the means he employed—means quite incompatible with minute completion.

Turner's art, even at the time when he finished his works most, differed entirely from the new school and its theorists. They seek the whole by a gradual agglomeration of parts painted imitatively, bit by bit; while he treated his work from the beginning as a whole, adding just as much detail in the parts as was consistent with the general effect and that sense of *mystery*, which he ever studied to preserve. This quality of mystery is most valuable to the painter, as Turner very well knew. "Hang that fellow's works," said a great living painter, on looking at a pre-Raphaelite picture; "one sees them all at once, and there is nothing left to find out." In the somewhat allied art of landscape gardening, how much may be obtained by intricacy and mystery; a small place may be made large, and the visitor invited by hidden terminations to seek out what he imagines may be beauties rarer than those he at first sees. So it is

with the landscape painter. His office is to lead his spectator on into his picture; to place before him passages of his work which he would desire to search into; passages like those in Nature, which, seen afar, suggest delightful glades, sunnier and fairer than those which are near, and which we long to reach and to range in. The suggestiveness of a work of art is one of its richest qualities; and the veriest blot of Turner is suited to suggest more than the most finished picture of imitative details. If we add to this the meanness of that art which, depending upon imitative rendering, cannot attempt the transient, and must content itself with those effects which being the most persistent are therefore the most commonplace, we can estimate how widely it differs from that of Turner, and how little right the new sect has to proclaim him as its prophet.

The wonderful industry of the painter is apparent even from his exhibited works. Rodd, who published in 1856 a catalogue of the pictures painted by Turner and exhibited at the Royal Academy, gives a list from 1787 to 1850, of 259 pictures; to which he adds sixteen more, exhibited between 1806 and 1846, at the British Institution, making in all 275 pictures. This, which might well represent the whole life of an ordinary man, was but a fraction of Turner's labours. How many fine easel pictures by him were never exhibited? and how shall we estimate the addition which should be made to the list by the drawings made solely for the engraver? In 1808 he commenced his first work of this class, pitting himself against Claude, in his *Liber Studiorum;* and from that time his engagements with publishers never ceased —his *Southern Coast Scenery*, his *England and Wales*,

Rivers of England, Rivers of France, Rogers's Italy, Rogers's Poems, &c.

The large property he had accumulated by his art, and his generous disposal of it (though partially frustrated) for the benefit of his brother artists and his countrymen, are well known. It does not need our comments; but we would in conclusion remark, that in giving his pictures to the nation, his request relative to their disposition was a mistake, rendered more glaring by the manner of their arrangement in the national collection. Turner wished that his *finished* pictures should be hung in the National Gallery, in company and in rivalry with the best works of the old masters. He was conscious of his own power; he felt that in many respects he was the greatest landscape painter of his age, or, indeed, of any age. He was quite willing to abide comparison with the best of past ages, and the decision of the world as to his position and merits. But to crowd a multitude of any man's works together, is not the best way to give pleasure to the spectator, or to raise the artist to the pinnacle of fame. This is unhappily the case with Turner's pictures. The limitation to his *finished* works is disregarded, and numbers of the unfinished productions of his old age, numbers of mere sketches, numbers of pictures painted almost as the furniture of exhibitions are huddled one above the other, —the crude and the incomplete—and fill the walls of the gallery where only the finest efforts of his genius, the most treasured jewels, should have been displayed.

Of Turner's life, passed entirely in the pursuit of art, enough has been said. He was elected an associate in 1799; a full member of the Royal Academy in 1802.

In 1807 he was appointed professor of perspective, the duties of which office he fulfilled for nearly thirty years. Secretive in his habits, he loved to make his journeys alone, as has already been illustrated by a characteristic anecdote. To the last he continued to absent himself for uncertain periods from the knowledge of his household and his friends. His death was as characteristic as his life. Just below the picturesque old timber bridge which spans the Thames from Chelsea to Battersea the river widens out into a deep bay. In the centre of the curve just at the bottom of a little half-country lane, two small cottages still remain, such as might be inhabited by the boatmen whose craft lie along the curving shore. These houses look out on to the broad expanse of river, ever as the day declines, reflecting the glories of the setting sun, and the evening sky. Towards London is the quaint old bridge, backed by the old world buildings, the dusky tower and tree-lined river bank at Chelsea. Looking westward the elms of Cremorne, the long low lammas land, the sparkling river with its numerous swans—all shut in sky-ward by Wandsworth Rise and the Surrey Hills. Although science has injured art by spanning this glorious view with its rigid road of iron, it is still a scene to be visited for itself and for its own beauties. But seek it out, ye lovers of art! Henceforth it must be a place of pilgrimage. In one of these cottages Turner died. That he might enjoy solitude and his lonely studies he was accustomed to lodge here under the assumed name of Brooks. Here, evening and morning, he could look out on his beloved Thames, and what was better still, see sky, ever changing, clean down to the hilly horizon. Here, unknown as the great

painter, his last illness seized him; from his sick bed he could yet see the setting sun, and here he died on the 19th of December, 1851. His body was conveyed to his house in Queen Anne Street, West, and thence to its last resting-place in the Crypt of St. Pauls.

We will conclude with a recent instance of the increased value of Turner's works. During his lifetime, Mr. Bicknell, of Dulwich, had been a purchaser of his pictures, some from his easel some at occasional sales, at prices even then thought high for landscape pictures, which are mostly of small size. On Mr. Bicknell's death, his collection came to the hammer in 1863, and the following are the prices obtained for those by Turner:—

	Purchased for.	Sold for.
Ivy-Bridge, Devon	£283 10	£924 0
Calder Bridge, Cumberland	288 15	525 0
The Wreckers	288 15	1,984 10
Antwerp: Van Goyen looking for a Subject	315 0	2,635 10
Helvoetsluys	283 10	1,680 0
Port Ruysdael	315 0	1,995 0
Ehrenbreitstein, on the Rhine	401 0	1,890 0
Venice, the Giudecca	262 0	1,732 10
Venice, the Campo Santo	262 0	1,732 10
Palestrina	1,050 0	1,995 0
Totals	£3,749 10	£17,094 0

Thus we find that in certainly less than thirty years these ten pictures had advanced in value nearly fivefold. The country meanwhile had advanced in material prosperity. The great manufacturers abounding in surplus capital had found in pictures, not only a source of pleasure and personal aggrandisement, but a good investment—and they at once became *patrons* of art, and large purchasers. Hence a new system of change, a new phase in the history of art, the effects of which will have to be weighed in our estimate of future art progress.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PATRONAGE OF ART.

True Art not the Child of Patronage—Plans to promote historic Art—*The British Institution*—Its Objects and Management—From which Artists are excluded—Plan of its Exhibitions—Results of the first Three—Novel Arrangements—Their Failure—Boasted Progress—Odd Conditions of Competition for premiums—Awards of the Directors—Scheme to Increase their Funds—Change their Plan of Premiums—*James Ward, R.A.*—Failure of the new Plan—Abandon the Offer of Premiums—Capricious Rewards to Exhibitors—Artists' Opinions upon their Acts—Exhibition of the Works of the Old Masters—Its Value to Artists—Exhibition of the Works of the early Painters of the English Schools—Success of this Exhibition—Annual Exhibitions of the Works of living Artists—Unwise Regulations—Decline and Degradation of these Exhibitions—Failure of the Institution to realize its professed Objects.

THE *literature* of our country has long since emancipated itself from patrons and patronage, while art is only just freeing itself from such illusions; and the term still lingers as applied to art alone. The purchaser of two or three modern pictures rejoices in the appellation of a "patron of art." Yet our artists are in no sense patronized, and would, with true independence, repudiate in a purchaser the title of patron. As some amass wealth without the heart to use it, so many purchase pictures without the taste to enjoy them: some from vanity, holding them only so long as the whim lasts; some as a good investment, and bide their market; some—now a large class—as mere dealers, selling as soon as cent. per cent. can be realized. But the few,—the true

amateurs—prompted by a love which endures to the end, retain their treasured objects. Yet all—in the language of the day—are alike the patrons of art.

Patronage was long assumed to be the true panacea for producing high art,—the hot-bed in which it was to be forced to a stalky maturity. Yet patronage, whether of individuals or of States, has rarely produced or cherished high art; while fashion, proverbially fickle, has more frequently adopted flashy mediocrity than true genius. We have some pertinent instances in the short history of our own school. George III., with an earnest desire to promote the arts of his country, became, in the truest sense, the patron of Benjamin West, graciously encouraging him with his royal favour, and with great liberality providing him with a yearly income. Yet West's contemporary, Barry, living under all the irritations of neglected poverty, has left a finer work in his epic series at the Society of Arts, than the greatest works of the Court favourite. The same sovereign neglected Reynolds, the ornament of his reign, and the great portrait painter of our school, while fashion adopted him; yet fashion at the same time coldly passed by Richard Wilson, the greatest landscape painter we had then known, and made the fortune of a foreigner whose meretricious landscapes it lauded and purchased.

The impulse to promote art which followed the establishment of the Royal Academy, was manifested in many ways, when its exhibitions had grown to an established maturity. Its members were forward in the discussion of schemes to naturalize historic art. As we have shown, they offered gratuitously, in 1773, to decorate St. Paul's Cathedral with their works. They

submitted to George III., in 1801, the proposal to erect a gallery to be progressively filled with busts, statues, portraits, and historical paintings, representing the heroes and heroic exploits of this country; a plan partially resumed in our own day. They also proposed the establishment of a gallery for the works of the rising artists of the English school; and at the beginning of the present century they suggested the formation of some institution which should reward and encourage our artists. This last suggestion, which was earnestly advocated by Benjamin West and Martin Shee (who both afterwards successively filled the president's chair at the Academy), alone took some shape at the time, though not exactly in the manner they had contemplated; it led to the foundation of the British Institution, which sought, by the union of some of the most distinguished individuals, to patronize native art. We purpose to trace the generous efforts of this influential body, both in regard to its fostering aims and their results, as an exemplification of patronage, as well as an example of a purely lay management; and in a future chapter to show the efforts of the Government in the same direction, and under similar conditions, as displayed more recently in the internal fresco decoration of Sir Charles Barry's great work,—the Legislative Palace at Westminster.

"The British Institution for Promoting the Fine Arts in the United Kingdom," was founded in 1805. Its defined objects were "to open a public exhibition for the sale of the productions of British artists, to excite the emulation and exertions of younger artists by premiums, and to endeavour to form a public gallery of the works of British artists, with a few select specimens

of each of the great schools." The King became the patron, the Prince of Wales the vice-patron, and the Institution commenced with fifty-six hereditary governors, subscribing 100 guineas each, twenty-seven life-governors subscribing fifty guineas each; which, with annual and other subscriptions, at once raised a fund of 7,167*l.*, which subsequent subscriptions gradually increased to more than double that sum. But in the following year the hereditary memberships were, with consent, abolished, and the subscription for a life-governor raised to 100 guineas. The management was confided to a committee of directors and a committee of managers, selected from the governors; and these committees, we are told in an authorized report, "were composed of some of the most illustrious and dignified characters in the kingdom." Yet while we find among these managers the names of some well-known dilettanti, we do not recognize the name of a single artist: not one man who could assist or advise with any professional knowledge. We shall therefore find in the conduct of the new art institution an example of what is now termed "the lay element," in its most unmixed form.

The directors were so fortunate as to purchase the lease of the Shakspeare Gallery in Pall Mall for 4,500*l.*, upon which they spent 700*l.*, in fittings, and were thus enabled to give prompt effect to their plans. They proposed to open their gallery for the exhibition and sale of modern works in January, and closing it about Midsummer, to re-open the gallery again in August for the study of the works of the old masters, to be obtained on loan from the governors and others. The exhibition of modern art was to comprise all works of painting and sculpture;

except portraits, either in oil or miniature, water-colour drawings, and architectural drawings, which were declared inadmissible. The first exhibition was opened with some éclat in February, 1806. Seventy-one artists, of whom sixteen were members and ten associates of the Royal Academy, sent works for exhibition; and forty-five works were sold, producing above 2,500*l*. In the second and third years' exhibitions there was a progressive increase in the number of exhibitors, and of works exhibited, and in these three exhibitions about one-fourth of the exhibited works found purchasers. But the receipts for admission—for here also, shillings were taken at the doors—did not cover the moderate charges incurred for the management.

Some experience had at this time surely been gained in the arrangement of exhibitions, some principles established by which this difficult task would be assisted; but the lay directors did not seek to avail themselves of professional help. They evidently had their own notions and wished to walk in new paths unfettered; so, as Prince Hoare tells, the works of their first exhibition were classified: one room was devoted entirely to the historical paintings, another to the landscapes and sea-pieces, and a third to compositions of familiar life, cattle, birds, and flowers with the surplus of the works assigned to the first two rooms; an arrangement which does not appear to have been tried a second time. We have a parallel instance in the recent recommendation of the Royal Academy Commission, that all the works of an artist sent to the same exhibition, should be hung together: a dilettante notion only, to which a dozen well-founded objections could be shown by any experienced artist; but

passing by the questions of the diminished facilities for grouping in a limited space, the greater attraction of a mixed arrangement, and the many advantages to the exhibitors themselves, as more recondite matters, it might have occurred to her Majesty's Commissioners how funny the eight half-length portraits of a popular portrait painter would look all of a row, and what endless cross purposes might be suggested to a cynical critic, by some unfortunates thus placed most *mal-à-propos*, *vis-à-vis*, or *dos-à-dos*.

The governors, however, expressed themselves satisfied with the successful establishment of the Institution to which they had so liberally subscribed; and in May, 1808, the executive congratulated the governors on its progress, and "on the effects produced and producing, in favour of British Art." They go on to say, "The prejudices against living and native merit are already done away, and the encouragement afforded to artists by the rapid sale of their productions, assisted by the study of the sublime works of art in the gallery of the Institution, has already produced a considerable improvement in the British School, not merely in the exhibitions of the Institution, but in the Royal Academy and others." Great results indeed, which it requires a faith exceeding the limits of experience to attribute to an institution not yet two years old, and we withhold our opinion till its nearer approach to maturity.

After the close of the first exhibition of the works of the living painters, the gallery was opened with a selection of thirteen works by the old masters, made by the influence of the governors for the study of young artists; and by this means one great, and hitherto unsupplied

want of the painter was satisfied. We possessed then no National Gallery, or collection of pictures, to which he could resort, no collection of antique sculpture which was open to him; and no doubt this means of studying and copying the works of the great masters of painting, was gratefully appreciated by the rising artist. Possibly those who lent their pictures did not approve, and with some reason, of the literal copies which were made from them, for in the following year copies were prohibited, unless with the express consent of the owner; the ground of this prohibition being, however, "the opinion of the committee that the objects of the Institution may be generally obtained by studies and sketches, and by the endeavour at producing companions to the pictures lent."

It is clear that the opinions here expressed, emanated from a body of men who did not understand the true wants of the student, or the manner in which he should pursue the study of the old masters; and the directors may claim without dispute, the very original idea that a young artist will find the improvement he seeks from the old masters, by producing companion pictures—an attempt which would try the ability of an old master himself. It is in such matters we see the erroneous attempts of the lovers of art to dictate the modes of study to those who are to become its professors. Young artists were, however, glad on any conditions to obtain access to fine works, and a large number, many of whom afterwards attained eminence, filled the gallery. They did not need to make complete copies, far less to produce companion pictures; but they desired to imitate the manner of painting and the means of using their

materials employed by the most reputed artists, as well as their separate excellencies in light and shade, colour, drawing, and the other qualities in which they were distinguished. But no such assistance was provided for them by the directors as might have been afforded by the advice of a professional visitor, whose precepts would have given additional value to the means of study they had provided.

The directors had been enabled in 1807, to invest 3,313*l.* in the funds, and they felt themselves in a condition to stimulate the younger artists by the offer of premiums, one of their original projects; and again adopting the novel principle which we have already mentioned, they offered premiums for the first, second, and third best "original picture proper in point of subject and manner to be a companion" to such three or more pictures selected by them from the works of the old masters lent for exhibition; the premiums to be awarded by a committee of their own body. Three premiums were adjudged in the following year, to painters whose names even are forgotten, and we suppose on the above scheme; but if so, it was not tried again, for we find no further mention of such strange conditions, though premiums were awarded in each of the two following years. In their first four Exhibitions, the directors state that 424 works of art were sold, producing 20,899*l.*, something less on an average than 50*l.* each; and upon this they again take occasion to talk bravely of their doings. In their report of 1811, they say "a tasteless and disgraceful preference is no longer given to the wretched fabrications of French and Italian picture-dealers, our artists are no longer *entirely* confined

to portrait-painting, but they have some, though not adequate encouragement, to exert their talents in the higher branches of art;" but the directors express a confident hope that by their exertions an adequate encouragement will at length be given to British artists. Did the directors in penning this report overlook or ignore the talents of Northcote, Copley, Opie, Fuseli, Stothard, and others, who then, as in our own time, have been esteemed as talented painters of subjects, both of history and poetry; and when taking such high credit for their labours of only four years, did the directors not know that for above forty years, the Royal Academy had been steadily educating a large class of students in the highest branches of art?

Their finances prospering, the directors increased their premises, and in 1811 offered 200 guineas, 100 guineas, and 50 guineas respectively, for the three best paintings, but strangely adjudged these sums to be *equally* divided between:—W. Hilton, for his "Entombment of Christ;" G. F. Joseph, for his "Return of Priam with the Dead Body of Hector;" and G. Dawe, for his "Negro overpowering a Buffalo." It says little for the discriminating judgment of the dilettanti directors who undertook the patronage of high art in England, that abandoning their own published scheme, and evading a decision which they thus showed their own incompetence to pronounce, they by this means virtually placed these three artists on the same level. We find no record of the dissatisfaction which must have ensued, but can well conceive the effect of their decision; nor are we at all surprised that the still higher premiums of 300 guineas, 200 guineas, and 100 guineas

in the next year did not tempt artists of merit again to submit their works to such a judgment, and that only the lowest premium was awarded to Mr. Joseph, one of the fortunate sharers in the equal division plan of the previous year, for his "Procession to Mount Calvary." But, as if to salve their decision, the directors weakly, but no doubt kindly, voted thirty guineas each to five of the competitors "on account of the expense of the frames, &c."

The payments of the governors and subscribers had now risen to 10,390*l.* guineas, and the directors were encouraged to enter into a speculation, which they state added largely to their funds. They purchased West's large picture of "Our Saviour healing the Sick in the Temple" for 3,000 guineas, and engaged Charles Heath for 1,800 guineas, to make a large engraving from it. By the exhibition of this painting alone the directors realized above 3,000*l.*, and in the following year (1812), the subscriptions for the engraving had reached 2,730*l.*; so that the titled directors may claim the merit of having initiated a scheme which speculative publishers have since so successfully followed, by purchasing, engraving, puffing, and publishing popular works of art, yet to the ruin of the highest class of engraving.

By this time the directors must have learned that the high art they wished to produce could not be obtained by their system of competitive rewards, for in 1813, they again withheld two premiums of 100 guineas each; awarding 300 guineas to Edward Bird, R.A., a painter of domestic scenes, for his "Death of Eli," and 200 guineas to J. Halls, a name now unknown, for his "Raising of Jairus' daughter." They also purchased

H. Richter's "Christ giving Sight to the Blind," for 500 guineas, and R. Westall's "Elijah restoring the Widow's Son to Life," for 400 guineas, and presented the former picture to a new Church at Greenock, and the latter to a Church at Egham. In 1814, the directors made some tardy amends to Hilton, whom they had treated with such capricious want of judgment in 1811, and purchased for 550 guineas, his large picture of "Mary Anointing the Feet of Jesus." They also awarded 200 guineas to Washington Allston, for his "Dead Man restored to Life by touching the Bones of the Prophet Elisha;" 100 guineas to H. Munro (an artist of whose works we have known nothing since), for his "Disgrace of Wolsey," and the same sum to Hoffland, for a "Storm on the Coast of Scarborough," and to Haydon for his "Judgment of Solomon."

The directors neither wanted the funds, nor, we readily admit, the desire, to promote art within the limits they had proposed to themselves; but they were sadly deficient in that judgment and knowledge which were equally essential to the success of their plans. They were on friendly terms with the Members of the Royal Academy and the heads of the profession, but whether from a misplaced reliance upon themselves or from whatever cause we know not, they did not seek that professional assistance which would have been invaluable. They might safely assume that an artist would feel encouraged, though the profession might not, by the receipt of a handsome premium under any circumstances; but how much higher would he appreciate and feel stimulated by the award, if it had been adjudged by the heads of his profession, and stamped by a judgment to which even his unsuccessful

competitors must bow. In one case a mere pecuniary gratuity is adjudged, in the other it is accompanied by a coveted honourable distinction. The common fortune of chance could not have left the directors always in the wrong—but to those who have any remembrance of the artists and the works rewarded, a judgment by lot would surely have been as often right. Art could not have been encouraged by premiums so distributed; an artist could have felt no confidence in such decisions. But, whether these or other reasons led to a change of this portion of their original plan, the directors now gave notice "that instead of any particular premiums for history or landscape painting, they have set apart 1,000 guineas, to be applied in their discretion in giving premiums for finished sketches illustrative or connected with the successes of the British army in Spain, Portugal, and France." And by a subsequent notice these premiums were extended to "Sketches of the Battle of Waterloo, or the Entry of the British and Prussian Armies into Paris."

This large sum, which appears in the light almost of a bribe to the artists, stimulated a concourse of competitors, from whose sketches the directors selected sixteen to be admitted to competition and for exhibition; and they awarded 150 guineas to Abraham Cooper, for his "Sketch of the Battle of Ligny," and the same sum to Luke Clennell, for his "Overthrow of the French Army at the Battle of Waterloo—*sauve qui peut.*" But tempted also by the grand historical idea with which they had started, they selected the sketch by James Ward, R.A., "The Battle of Waterloo—an allegory," and commissioned him to paint a picture, three times

the size of his sketch, for 1,000 guineas. Ward was highly distinguished as an animal painter. He had great power of execution, and we have no doubt that his sketch was vigorously painted and coloured, and such as would be most likely to allure a judgment not tempered by professional knowledge; yet surely no artist of reputation would have counselled this selection: and it seems most probable that the painter himself, competing be it remembered only by the production of a *finished sketch*, would not have elected to paint a picture from it upon a scale so largely magnified—exaggerating both difficulties and defects—had he not been tempted by what at that time was so liberal, and we think unexpected, a commission. We are induced to copy the painter's description of his sketch, which in itself is a corroboration of our opinion. The large picture would have been a trial and a task for Rubens himself.

"The genius of Wellington on the Car of War, supported by Britannia, and attended by the seven Cardinal Virtues, commanding away the demons Anarchy, Rebellion, and Discord, with the horrors of War. Bellona is endeavouring to take the reins and urge on the horses with her many-thonged scourge, but which are tightly held in by Love, seated upon the head of Britannia's Lion; while they (*sic*) are regulated by Prudence, Fortitude, Temperance, and Justice. Usurpation is sinking under the feet of the horses; Opposition and Tumult under the wheels of the car, on the sides of which are the Rose, Thistle, and Shamrock, and on its end the palm of Victory, to which are endeavouring to fasten themselves Anger, Cruelty, and Revenge, but falling

under the foot of Charity, whose other foot treads on the Emblems of Slavery. She is endeavouring to raise her children into the bosom of Religion, who rising above the clouds of Folly and Superstition, is pursued by Malice, Calumny, and Detraction, and bowing under the pressure of Prejudice and Obstinacy, emerging from the dense clouds of Ignorance and Error, she stretches out her arms to Britannia for protection, supported by Faith and led on by Hope who, through the medium of the Cross, directs her attention to the Deity in the three incorporated triangles expressive of the Trinity, immediately under the glory of which is the Dove of Peace and the Angel of Divine Providence expanding her arms over the whole group, and under whose wings, as her offspring, is Victory ready to crown the Hero, and Plenty with the full cornucopia to pour upon Britannia in the event of Peace, while the children, as the lesser victories, have and are scattering the Roses of their conquest upon the Genius of Britannia." Need we go further with our extract to include the groups of Heroes—hydra-headed monsters—Death endeavouring to unveil herself and send forth her various shapeless and horrid forms. Humanity, like Love, seated on the head of the British Lion—and so on?

The result was fatal to the judgment of the directors. This great allegory when completed was we believe never exhibited. The directors presented it to the Royal Hospital at Chelsea. Like the Vicar of Wakefield's family group, "it was so very large they had no place in the house to fix it," and it is stowed away rotting on a roller, in an oblivion that is well both for the reputation of the directors, and the fame of its really

talented painter. The fact was, the age of allegory was past, and all the munificence of the donors, combined with Ward's real talent as a painter could not revive it. It has been our lot to see this great work—great at least in the sense of size — truly it is going to decay, and for any credit to the painter, or for any great merit as a work of art, it is little loss to the world. Were there found a space to stretch it on the walls, it would only be a monument of the false taste of the directors in encouraging such art, and the hopelessness of attempting to impose on the public the art of an age that has passed away.

In tracing the management of the Institution, we are anxious that James Ward's talents as an artist should not be estimated by our opinions upon the ambitious work which, on the mistaken commission of the directors, he was induced to attempt. He was of an art family. George Morland married his sister. Bred a mezzotint engraver, he early distinguished himself; his engravings possessing very great merits, from their truly artistic character. He became no less distinguished as a painter of landscape with figures, and of animals; particularly the latter. His great work of "The Bull," has found its proper place in the National Gallery. He had a strong, but peculiar feeling for colour. His style of drawing was vigorous, though imbued with an evident desire to exhibit his knowledge. He was elected an associate of the Academy in 1807, and a full member in 1811; and living to the age of ninety-one years, he died on the 17th November, 1859.

Following this failure, one prominent feature of the directors' plan was abandoned. They had failed to

discover and reward the early germs of talent struggling to obtain recognition, they had not only passed by the right man, but had too often chosen the wrong—and now to avoid the difficulties of selection, for which they were not in any way qualified, they announced that no further premiums would be offered to competition; and determined in lieu to adopt a system of gratuities, and to give commissions for pictures on a large scale—they had not yet learnt that a large picture is not necessarily a great work—for presentation to our public buildings. The sums awarded in 1817 were on this plan, and were "expressly stated to be donations presented in compliment and encouragement of merit." Here the directors were on safer grounds. They incurred no responsibility in their judgments when scattering their donations among painters of established name; not for the merits of a single picture even, but as a general homage to public opinion, not the far-seeing distinction of unrecognized genius. We find these donations then were made for the "general merits" of an artist's works, "in approbation" of his works, and "in compliment for merit;" and we must note that in 1828, after Etty had exhibited at least seventeen years on the walls of the Institution, the "general merits of his works" were at last found out, and "an acknowledgment of 100 guineas" awarded to him. These capricious rewards, gradually diminishing and intermittent, finally ceased in 1842; the directors having in thirty-four years given 6,080*l.* in "premiums and complimentary donations." Then, with such results as we have shown, they gave notice "that the effect of these premiums was not commensurate with their expec-

tations, and they do not therefore think it advisable to continue them next year."

How art must have winced under such patronage—such waste of large means intended for its true culture; while a large public were misled by the pompous decisions of the lay directory; and merit, pushed aside, stood reproved before the world by such blunders. Among many, too many instances, we select one from Mr. Uwins, then Secretary to the Water-Colour Society, who says in 1815, "There is one thing which will excite a great bustle among artists and amateurs; it is a most extraordinary picture of Havell's, in which he has painted sunshine so near the truth that it absolutely makes the eyes ache to look at it. The artists are all alarmed, and the patrons stand aghast; but Havell, strong in the power of genius, goes on in spite of the world combined. At the British Institution the picture was refused on account of its novelty and originality; it puzzled their wise heads, and in the true spirit of ignorance and barbarism, because they could not understand it, *they turned it out.* Poor England! The fine arts are in a hopeful condition, when those who assume to themselves the character of patrons are too ignorant to lead, and too obstinate to be led! But it is an ill wind that blows nobody good; it falls to us to publish the rejected addresses, and now let the public be the judge. Fortunately for the arts, while our Society exists, there will always be an appeal to a *higher tribunal* than that which the contemptible aristocracy of the British Institution have attempted to set up. I use strong language, I cannot help it; however excellent it is to have a giant's strength, it is pitiful to use it like a giant."

The judgment of the directors was no less impugned in their selections for the exhibitions of the works of the old masters. In the Catalogue Raisonné for 1815 and 1816, published anonymously, but well known to be written by Reinagle, R.A., we find:—"'Virgin and Child.' Raphael. P. J. Miles, Esq. So you believe this to be by Raphael, Mr. Miles! 'Adonis going to the Chase.' Titian. Earl of Darnley. And you believe this to be by Titian, Lord Darnley! God help you both! 'Landscape, with the Flight into Egypt.' A Carrachi. Earl of Suffolk. Oh, most worthy and most renowned, most noble and well-informed directors! How low, how very low do we bow to you for the selection of such a picture as this. Entertaining a just contempt for this silly piece of puerility, we cannot but imagine its owner may very possibly be of a class upon whom it is by no means difficult for himself or others to impose, &c. 'Europa.' Titian. The Earl of Darnley. When a lady is permitted to exhibit herself in this pickle, it would but be decent to insist on her putting on clean linen. Of all the disgusting drabs we ever saw, this bears away the bell. She is, however, very well matched in the 'Risk.' What Jupiter could see in such a mawks, or what the mawks could see in such a Jupiter, we are at a loss to comprehend." Such was the style of attack, such the barren criticism at that time; which, though we quote, we are far from admiring.

We must now revert to the manner in which the directors disposed of the works of which they became possessed. Their original purpose was "to endeavour to form a public gallery of the works of 'British artists,' with a few select specimens of each of the great schools:"

a noble intention which still awaits its development, for we have yet no avowed national collection of the British School; though Mr. Sheepshanks, Mr. Vernon, Mr. Turner, R.A., and others, have made such generous contributions towards one. This seemed the most promising and, with competent management, the best part of the directors' plan; yet no steps were ever taken to carry it out. Of the grand works of historic and sacred art which they had stimulated and purchased, we have told how two were presented to churches distant from the metropolis, a third, Hilton's "Mary Anointing the Feet of Christ," was buried in one of the City churches; and Ward's "Great Allegory" among the lumber at Chelsea Hospital. But we have not mentioned the purchase, in 1816, of Wilkie's most characteristic work, "The Distraining for Rent," for 600 guineas. Of this picture Washington Irving says, "The British Institution bought Wilkie's 'Distraining for Rent,' and put it in a cellar;" and he describes going to see it with his friend Leslie, R.A., who, he tells, "stood long before it saying nothing, but when he turned to go away the tears were flowing fast, and he declared it one of the most touching pictures he had ever seen." The directors had then purchased a fine work, which might have been indeed an ornament to the British Gallery they had talked about; but it was neither heroic in size or subject, and they sold it—sold it, in 1822, to Raimbach the engraver, "who was permitted to become its possessor on paying them, by four instalments, the sum they had paid for it." It is interesting to know that Mr. Sheepshanks offered the same sum for this picture after Raimbach had made an engraving of it, and was promised the first refusal. It, however, became

the property of Mr. Wells of Redleaf, we do not know on what terms, and remained in his collection till his death.

We will complete the short list of the directors' purchases. In 1820 they purchased, for 500 guineas, the "Battle of Waterloo," by George Jones, R.A., and presented this picture to Chelsea Hospital, where it still hangs. In 1825, for 1,000 guineas, Hilton's fine work of "Christ Crowned with Thorns," presented to St. Peter's Church, Pimlico, where it narrowly escaped destruction by fire; and Northcote's "Entombment of our Saviour," for 150 guineas, presented to Chelsea New Church; and in 1827, his "Christ's Agony in the Garden," 100*l.*, presented to Hanover Chapel, Regent Street. The directors also presented to Greenwich Hospital, where in the large, but ill-lighted gallery, they find from their subjects an appropriate place, four works which were painted on commissions given by them—Arnald's "Battle of the Nile," 500*l.*; Drummond's "Admiral De Winter surrendering his Sword to Admiral Duncan," 500*l.*; H. P. Briggs's "George III. presenting the sword to Lord Howe on board the Princess Charlotte," 525*l.*; and George Jones's, R.A., "Battle of St. Vincent—Nelson Boarding," 525*l.* To these purchases we must add a portrait by Jackson, R.A., and three portrait-busts; the last purchase made in 1830.

The directors had, up to this time, spent 10,161*l.* upon the works of living artists, and to that extent must have assisted them individually. But this essential part of the directors' scheme then collapsed; no premiums or commissions have since been given, yet art has survived and flourished. The directors also purchased two pictures by ancient masters: in 1811, "The Consecration of St.

Nicholas," by Paul Veronese, for 1,575*l.*; in 1823, "The Vision of St. Jerome," by Parmegiano, for 3,302*l.*; and two pictures by deceased artists of the English School; in 1829, "The Holy Family," by Sir Joshua Reynolds, 1,950 guineas; and "The Market Cart," by Gainsborough, 1,050 guineas; and these four fine works, with the "Christ Healing the Sick," an unworthy companion, they presented to the public on the formation of the National Gallery, of which the first four are now distinguished ornaments. On the occasion of the purchase of the "Saint Jerome," Leslie tells us, that Lord Egremont called on him and asked if he had a list of the directors of the Institution, "for," said, he, "I want to see who are the men who have given so much money for that broken-backed 'Saint John.' A poor way, I think, of encouraging art." The purchase of the above pictures by deceased artists of the British School, was, however, more in accordance with the avowed objects of the founders of the Institution.

The exhibitions are the remaining feature of the Institution—the exhibition of the works of living artists in the early spring; and of the great men who had preceded them, in the summer. The latter of which we propose to treat first, appears to have grown out of the small collections made up for the students; for whose use the directors had contributed from their own collections, and, by their example and influence, had induced others to lend, the valuable paintings they possessed; and then, having introduced and established the practice of loans of works of art, a custom from which such true gratification and improvement have ensued, they extended their scheme, and were enabled to make

a collection of the works of Sir Joshua Reynolds, and exhibit them to the public in the summer of 1813. The idea was a happy one, and merits the fullest recognition. It was an assertion of English art, and an honour to our great painter; and the directors earned the gratitude of the artists and the public. The exhibition opened with no less than one hundred and forty-three of Reynolds's selected works, to which others were subsequently added.

Following up this successful celebration in the next summer, the directors formed a collection of the works of four of the most distinguished of our early painters, comprising fifty-eight pictures by Hogarth, seventy-three by Gainsborough, eighty-five by Richard Wilson, and twelve by Zoffany. Then, still selecting from the rich collections of our countrymen, the directors, in 1815, exhibited the works of the great masters of the Dutch and Flemish Schools, and in 1816 the works of the Italian and Spanish Schools. In 1817, reverting to our English painters, the directors exhibited a miscellaneous selection from the works of Dobson, Nathaniel Hone, Opie, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Runciman, Mortimer, Wright, Peters, Wheatley, De Loutherbourg, Hodges, Hoppner, Wilson, Hogarth, Stubbs, Dance, Copley, Romney, Gainsborough Dupont, Gavin Hamilton, Rigaud, Seymour, George Morland, Webber, Brooking, Gilpin, Marlow, Barret, Burnet, Bourgeois, Cipriani, Scott, and Gainsborough. Here were the works of the chief artists of the previous generation; the founders of a school of art in England; the first members of the Royal Academy; all men whose names and works will find a place in art memories, though some of them have

fallen from the height of their living reputations into the second rank, or even still lower. Yet the works of all possess an interest, and the united collection formed an epoch from whence to trace the progress of our art, which did not occur again till the larger collection in the International Exhibition of 1862. In the two succeeding years the directors exhibited miscellaneous collections from the great masters of the Continental Schools; and in 1820 they made a novel exhibition of painting and sculpture, interesting both to the lover of art and the antiquary, consisting of portraits representing distinguished persons in the history and literature of the United Kingdom; and though in company with several foreign artists who had practised in England, the collection again contained many of the works of the early painters of our school—Walker, Dobson, Murray, Riley, Lely, Kneller, Hogarth, Pine, Hudson, Dance, Reynolds, Gainsborough, Copley; and the sculptors, Nollekins, Bacon, and Joseph.

With great satisfaction we have described the highly interesting collections made from year to year by the influence and enterprise of the directors. They were continued with much success. In 1823 one room was devoted exclusively to the works of Reynolds. In 1825 the collection consisted of the works of living British artists, each painter selecting what he deemed to be his best work. In 1826, George IV.'s private collection from Carlton Palace was lent for exhibition. In 1830, the works of Sir Thomas Lawrence, then recently deceased; and in 1833 the works of the three first Presidents of the Royal Academy—Reynolds, West, and Lawrence. On several subsequent occasions, a room

has been set apart for the works of a deceased painter of our school. In 1835, the enamels of Henry Bone were so distinguished. In 1840, the works of Hilton; in 1841, of Stothard; in 1842, of Wilkie; in 1845, of Callcott. But in the following years the collections showed less originality of selection; the field was narrowed as the works of one great painter after another were collected, and one distinguished gallery after another ransacked. Yet this yearly gathering of fine works so graciously lent for exhibition has not failed to bring forward pictures of the highest character and interest. It forms the one branch of the directors' scheme which they were enabled to conduct successfully. To them the renowned works of the great masters were well known; and to their influence the possessors were accessible. It required little nice discrimination for the selection and arrangement of those works, and the exercise of no judgment challenging appeal; the exhibitions of the old masters, therefore, have been eminently successful.

The Exhibitions of the works of the living artists are the subject of more tender remark; yet they challenge criticism. They were established specially to encourage high art: original compositions in history, here, if nowhere else, were to find an honoured place, fostered by premiums and donations, sheltered by the most distinguished patronage; and at a time when money was proverbially scarce, they found purchasers and thus allured the artists to an institution so favoured by fashionable dilettantism. Yet the murmurs of dissatisfaction were soon heard, and soon grew louder at the selection, and more particularly the arrangement, of the pictures sent for exhibition. It would be so, if the task were

assigned to an angel; but when undertaken by the heads of the profession, who know the relative merits of the contributors and can distinguish the meritorious attempts of a young and unknown artist, they can defend themselves from incompetence, at least, and if charged with exclusiveness or favouritism, may authoritatively appeal to the justice of their decisions. Not so the seven illustrious directors to whom this duty is assigned by the governors; but, as alleged, usually engrossed by some one or two only who have their favourites. Be this as it may, one painter after another has felt himself aggrieved by the decisions of an authority which the profession would not recognize; and from this, with other causes—the establishment of other exhibitions, and the absorbing interest of the Royal Academy Exhibitions—this exhibition has been long in a gradual state of decline. We find one instance in point, in Knowles' "Life of Fuseli." This eminent painter, he tells us, wished the new-formed Institution to succeed, yet thought, to use his own words, "from the colour of the egg that it was more likely to produce an ichneumon than a sphynx," and expressed his reluctance to become a contributor. And not without reason, for having, by the advice of his friend, Mr. Coutts, sent his painting of "The Lazar House," the leading members of the Institution hesitated to give it admission, considering the subject too terrible for the public eye; and they had three meetings before they came to the resolution to admit it." And these were the self-constituted patrons and judges of historic art!

The directors had made regulations from time to time with respect to the admission and arrangement of paintings sent for exhibitions. They had notified that in

the selection preference would be given to those not previously exhibited; that those works not exhibited before should have a prior claim to the most elegible places; then that pictures previously exhibited should be inadmissible, except those from the Royal Academy exhibitions; and finally, after these and other regulations, all works previously exhibited were excluded in 1844, by a notice rescinding the exception with regard to works from the Royal Academy. This resolution was seriously damaging to the exhibition which had shown so many retrograde symptoms. The first desire of a painter is to distinguish himself on the Academy walls, the members of the Academy send their finest works there as a matter of course, and the young painter is eager to see his first efforts side by side with the works of the heads of his profession. But the works of both, unsold at the Academy, were often sent to the Institution for the second chance of a purchaser, and by the regulation now made, the directors deprived their future exhibitions of many pictures which would have greatly added to their strength and importance.

It would, however, serve no useful purpose to follow the course of the exhibition from its commencement, when so many distinguished artists contributed to its success, to its present fallen estate. We propose only to describe how low that now is; confining our remarks to the general character of the exhibition—avoiding all individual criticism—prompted only by a pained consciousness of truth. On entering the Exhibition of the year 1864, we can scarcely express the sad feelings with which we passed from picture to picture; lovers of art, desirous at all times to see and admire merits before we

criticise defects, anxious to seek out even the germs of future promise, till, cruelly disappointed, a depressing feeling of humiliation seized us. In these rooms the grand style was to be naturalized and the English School trained in sacred and epic art; but around us not one virtuous attempt at high art could be discovered: a most meretricious and mischievous style pervaded the whole—we can hardly make an exception—an utter absence of even attempts which might lead to better things. Crude incompleteness; a vulgar bravura of manner without drawing or truth, a gaudy colouring shewing no regard for nature, no invention in the choice of subjects; but daring imitations of the successful art of others, both in subject and manner—such were the pervading characteristics of the exhibiton, abandoned alike by genius and hope.

The whole were painted for a market: made to sell, like the Sheffield hawkers' razors, and made for a price. Now we would not quote price, as a test either of the merit or value of a picture; but taken in the aggregate, what can be said of an exhibition of modern art, an exhibition founded with great pretensions, when, contrasting the really very high prices readily given for every work of true merit, we find that more than one half of the pictures exhibited are priced by their painters, at sums not exceeding twenty guineas each, and more than one fourth at ten guineas and under. To speak exactly, there were in this exhibition 633 paintings, several of which were not priced; but of the whole collection, 351 were priced at twenty guineas and under, and of that number 165 at ten guineas and under. The arrangement of the pictures was also bad, and showed great want of discernment; for in the very exceptional

case of an artist, probably a young beginner, evincing any earnest attempt to imitate nature, or to draw or finish his subject with due care, it had gained him no preference: his work was placed in a corner or on the ground, and that without the excuse that better places were occupied with better works, but glaringly the contrary.

The extended influence of the directors, the liberal subscriptions by which they were assisted, the support of the artists, and the time, were alike favourable to the scheme; yet with all these advantages, bit by bit the plan has been a failure,—the proposal to make a public collection of the works of British artists, the encouragement of high art by rewards and premiums, and lastly the exhibition of modern works. The objects and intentions of the founders of the institution were patriotic, yet they have not proved attainable by patronage, and we have shown how they have failed to be attainable under lay management. The exhibition has been deserted by the heads of the profession, and is in a chronic state of decline, leading to dissolution. We do not think that this will be arrested, and we question further whether its revival under the original conditions would prove in the interests of art. It is, from its concurrent period of opening, the competitor of the Exhibition of the Society of British Artists, in Suffolk Street, and in conflict with the interests of that body; which merits higher recognition and support. Could it attain this by any amalgamation of the two exhibitions, by which the united collection might be brought under professional management, and Suffolk Street removed to the more favoured locality in Pall Mall, art would be the gainer.

CHAPTER V.

HOWARD, HILTON, HAYDON, AND ETTY.

Henry Howard, R.A.:—His early Training—Travels in Italy—Paints Poetic and Classic Subjects—Occasionally Portraits—Character of his Art.—*William Hilton, R.A.*:—Studies at the Royal Academy—Historic Art his sole aim—His first Works—Premiums gained at the British Institution—Appointed Keeper of the Royal Academy—Decayed State of his Works—His "Crucifixion"—Opinion of his Merits—*Benjamin Robert Haydon*:—Determines to be a Painter—Comes to London to Study—Admitted into the Schools of the Royal Academy—His enthusiasm for Art—Paints his "Dentatus"—Inflated Opinion of his own Work—In Debt—Obstinately pursues his own Way—His "Solomon" and "Christ's Entry into Jerusalem"—Again in Difficulties—Claims Public Assistance—Still deeply Embarrassed—Commences the "Raising of Lazarus"—Opinion upon this Work—Thrown into the King's Bench—The "Mock Elèction," and "Chairing the Member"—Paints Portraits and any thing—"The Reform Banquet"—Lectures in London and in the Provinces—Napoleon Portraits—The Fresco Commissions—His Claims to Employment—Utter Disappointment and sad Death—Criticism on his Art—*William Etty, R.A.*:—Serves his Time to a Printer—Cherishes a love of Art—Comes to London—Enters the Schools of the Royal Academy—His Perseverance and Manner of Painting—The Beauty of Woman his Theme—His Choice of Subjects—"Cleopatra," "Judith," and "Benaiah," critically described—His smaller Works—Recollections of his Character and Art.

An influential attempt to foster historic art in this country has been described in the previous chapter; and in this we propose to trace the career, marked by struggles and neglect, of four talented men, who devoted themselves to naturalize the grand style in the English school, and to assert its power. They were contemporaries in the

schools, and competitors in the race of fame, but one came a few years before the other three, and had a more lengthened career; and to him we give the precedence. *Henry Howard, R.A.*, was born in London 31st January, 1769. He left school at thirteen with an average education, and a little knowledge of Latin, and then from time to time accompanied his father to and from Paris, and picked up French. Though not intended for an artist, he showed a predilection for drawing, which growing stronger, at the age of seventeen he became the pupil of Philip Reinagle, R.A. In 1788 he was admitted a student of the Royal Academy, and in 1790 he gained the two first medals—the first silver medal in the life school, and the gold medal for his original painting of Caractacus—the president Reynolds complimenting him, that his picture was the best which had been submitted to the Academy.

Having thus distinguished himself, he determined, in pursuit of his art, to visit Italy, and set off early in 1791. He went by Paris and Geneva over Mont Cenis to Turin, Milan, Parma, Bologna and Florence, seeing and sketching many of the fine works of art in those cities, and finally to Rome. Here he pursued his studies, and painted in competition for the travelling studentship of the Royal Academy a large composition, the figures life-size, of "The Death of Abel, a subject from the text of Gesner." The treatment, which was hardly scriptural, was unfortunate, and he was not only unsuccessful in his competition, but his work narrowly escaped rejection at the Academy Exhibition in 1794. He returned by Florence, Venice, and Trieste to Vienna, Dresden, and home by Hamburg. He was now in his twenty-sixth year. He

had been trained at the Royal Academy in classic art, and had gained the first medals; he had travelled and studied the works of the great Italian and German schools, but with an evident attachment to the former; and thus, well prepared for the effort, he commenced his career. His tastes led him to the poetic and classic, rather than to the more severe and grand style, and in 1795 he exhibited three small-sized pictures, "Puck and Ariel," "Satan awaking in the Burning Lake," and a portrait; and in the following year a finished sketch of the "Planets drawing Light from the Sun,"—

> "Hither as to their fountain, other stars
> Repairing, in their golden urns draw light—"

which, with some modifications, he twice repeated, first as "The Solar System," exhibited in 1823, and later on the ceiling of the Duchess of Sutherland's boudoir.

He continued to paint works of this class from the English and Latin poets, with occasionally a subject from the Scriptures, and at times found much employment as a portrait painter. He also made a few designs for book illustration, and for the ornamentation of Wedgwood's pottery; some of which latter he executed himself on the clay. His classic tastes received further development by his employment in 1799 on a series of drawings for the Dilettante Society, from the antique sculpture in England; a work which he completed with great accuracy and finish. In 1801 he married Miss Reinagle, the daughter of his old master, and in the same year was elected an associate of the Royal Academy. In 1808, upon exhibiting his "Christ Blessing Little Children," the figures life-size (a work which is now the altar-piece of the church in Berwick Street, St. James's), he was

elected a member of the Academy; three years later he was appointed to fill the office of secretary, and in 1833 was chosen professor of painting. From 1794 to 1847 he was a constant exhibitor at the Royal Academy. Among his best works are "The Pleiades," for which the directors of the British Institution awarded him a premium in 1810; "The Birth of Venus," probably his most esteemed picture; "The Solar System;" "The Story of Pandora," and the "Lady in a Florentine Dress," a portrait of his daughter. His works are in the collections of the Duke of Sutherland, the Marquis of Lansdowne, and in the Soane and Vernon Galleries. He died at Oxford, where he had gone on a visit to his son, 5th October, 1847.

Howard will not be able to maintain a high rank in the English school. Distinguished in the outset of his career by the highest honours to be gained as a student, he fell short of the genius that will live. His works are graceful and pretty, marked by propriety, pleasing in composition; his faces and expression good, his drawing correct; but his style cold and feeble. His chief works were painted to a small scale, and were suited to the taste of the day; but he was glad to eke out his income by portraiture, and as a designer. As a lecturer he had little originality of thought; his matter wanted interest, and failed to catch the mind or impress itself upon the memory of the student. He is a part of our school—a link in the chain—but he has not exercised much influence either by his pictures or his teaching. His life was uneventful—neither marked by great success or by failure. He possessed the esteem of his profession.

William Hilton, R.A., was another history painter,

whom the Royal Academy may fairly claim as an offspring, and the English school as a representative. With more talent than Howard, and with greater resolution, he devoted himself exclusively to high art, and was neither tempted aside by the gains of portraiture or of applied design. Yet his works, from their large size and subject, were less suited to the public taste, and had, in his day, little chance of finding purchasers. He was the son of a portrait painter at Newark, and was born at Lincoln, 3rd June, 1786. He early evinced a love for art, and in 1800 he became the pupil of John Raphael Smith, the mezzotint engraver. He entered as a student at the Royal Academy in 1806, and applying himself zealously to anatomy, soon made himself master of the figure. One of his first works was a series of designs carefully finished in oil for the *Mirror*, followed by a second series for the *Citizen of the World*. He had previously, in 1803, exhibited "Banditti," and now, asserting his power, he commenced his classic works, exhibiting "Hector re-inspired by Apollo," "Cephalus and Procris," "Venus carrying the wounded Achilles," "Ulysses and Calypso." In 1810 he completed a subject from English history, "The Citizens of Calais delivering their Keys to King Edward III.," for which he was awarded a premium of fifty guineas by the directors of the British Institution.

He next year attempted sacred art, and in 1811 received from the Institution a second premium of 122*l.* 10*s.* for his "Entombment of Christ." This was followed by "Christ restoring Sight to the Blind" and "Mary anointing the Feet of Jesus;" and for this latter picture he was fortunate to find purchasers in the

directors of the institution, who gave him 550 guineas for it, and in 1821 presented it to the church of St. Michael in the City. We do not find that he had hitherto sold his pictures, yet he quietly and unobtrusively pursued his own high path in art. His father, who lived till 1822, probably continued to assist him with money, yet in his twenty-fifth year, and after producing so many fine works, he must have bitterly felt, gentle as he was in spirit, that he was neglected—his talent without reward. Haydon tells an anecdote which has reference to the picture we have just mentioned and to Hilton's condition at this time. He says: "Hilton, my fellow-student, had been successful in selling his 'Mary anointing the Feet of Christ,' in the British Gallery, for 500 guineas, which saved him from ruin. I told him he was a lucky fellow, for I was just on the brink of ruin. 'How?' said he. I explained my circumstances, and he immediately offered me a large sum to assist me. This was indeed generous. I accepted only 34*l.*, but his noble offer endeared him to me for the rest of his life. A more amiable creature never lived, nor a kinder heart; but there was an intellectual and physical weakness in everything he did." In 1825 Hilton painted his fine work, "Christ Crowned with Thorns." This work was also purchased by the directors of the British Institution for 1,000 guineas, and was presented by them to the new church of St. Peter, Eaton Square, in 1828; and on a fire in that edifice in 1838, was happily rescued from the flames. In 1834 he was again fortunate in obtaining a premium of 100 guineas for his "Editha Searching for the Body of Harold."

It is a pity that, of one so talented and so well known

to a generation of students—to whom we ourselves are indebted for so much friendly teaching—so few facts have been recorded. In his earlier career, his quiet, homely habits, added to his weak health, kept him from society; and he was by nature opposed to all that brought him into personal notice: he gave the public his works; but he avoided the notoriety which his talents would have gained him. In 1818 he visited Italy, and was at Rome with his friend Phillips, R.A.; and the same year he exhibited his "Rape of Europa" and "Rape of Ganymede." He was elected in 1814 an associate of the Royal Academy, and in 1820 a full member. In 1827 he was appointed the Keeper of the Academy, an office for which he was specially qualified; and in the following year he married. In 1835 he had the misfortune to lose his wife. Her loss, to a man of his habits a severe affliction, aggravated an asthma, from which he had some time suffered; naturally silent and pensive, he gave way to great depression, and never altogether rallied. He died 30th December 1839, in his 54th year, of disease of the heart, and was buried in the churchyard of the Savoy chapel; where his sister—the widow of his true friend, De Wint—has placed a font in memory of him.

On his death, several of his finest works remained unsold—a sad instance of the little encouragement he had met with. Among them his "Angel releasing Saint Peter from Prison," "Sir Calepine rescuing Serena"—both exhibited in 1831—and his "Editha," for which he received a premium from the British Institution in 1834. His "Christ delivering Peter," conceived in the same spirit as Raphael's well-known work in the Vatican, was painted during his Keepership,

and having tempted no purchaser, usually hung in the Lecture Theatre. As students, we recollect it fresh and beautiful, the face of the angel finely conceived and grand in style. Alas! When we again saw it at the International Exhibition of 1862 it was a mere wreck: the face seemed to have been entirely repainted; it looked shrunk and weazened, and the other parts of the picture either corrugated, or gaping in wide glistening fissures. How much truly has the *brown School* to answer for: how many fine pictures has it brought to utter ruin! His "Editha," the swan-necked lady, has twice nearly slipped from the canvas; and though it is still exhibited in the Vernon Collection, is only a seamed wreck of his genius. His "Sir Calepine," which was bought by the subscriptions of the students—who loved him as their teacher, and honoured his persistent efforts in historic art—has been removed from the National Gallery, to which they presented it, as unfit for exhibition in its ruined state. His "Crucifixion," purchased by the corporation of Liverpool, is a fine work, and an honour to the English school; but, sad to say, like his other works, from the unfortunate pigments he used, added to the want of proper attention, it is in a very dilapidated state. The composition forms a triptych, a centre and two wings; the centre much higher than the wings. In its treatment it is solemn and grand, and free from commonplace repetitions; a supernatural light streams down from heaven on the crucified Saviour, whose body hangs on the cross in the pallor of death; the repentant thief, placid and calm, on the left; on the right the writhing reviler. At the foot of the cross are the women, cast down in terrible agony. The fainting

Virgin Mother is supported by St. John, while the two other Marys hang dreadingly over her. In the right wing, a Roman soldier, terrified by the earthquake and the supernatural light, rushes out of the picture. In the left, the Scribes and Pharisees who have witnessed the crucifixion, are also hurrying from the terrible scene, hateful yet fearful. The action is fine, and finely given; the drawing correct, but a little rigid, and there is less memory of the works of others in this picture than is usual with him. Hilton's art was chilled by neglect, and never fully developed. He was a man of more talent than genius, and not inclined to depart from precedent; but his reputation will be maintained if his works endure.

We have regretted the absence of information necessary to do justice to our notice of Hilton; but we have no cause for such remark with regard to *Benjamin Robert Haydon*, who left behind him an autobiography and a mass of journalism, extending to the last hour of his fitful life, which have been published under the careful editorship of Mr. Tom Taylor. He was born at Plymouth 26th January, 1786, and was the son of a bookseller there who claimed a descent from an old Devonshire family. Having gained a little knowledge of Latin and Greek, and made some attempts at drawing, he was apprenticed to his father's trade; but of unsettled habits, and preferring art to bookselling, he determined, in spite of the entreaties of his parents, that "he must be a painter." He started for London in May, 1804, with 20*l.* in his pocket, and set himself closely to his studies. He was by nature obstinately self-willed and self-reliant. He had already made anatomy his study, and with the most exaggerated opinion of his own powers he aimed at

the highest style in art. He brought with him an introduction to his townsman Northcote, who cynically said to him:—"Heestorical peinter! why yee'll starve, with a bundle of straw under your head." But he was neither discouraged nor depressed, by an opinion which after-experience proved too painfully near the truth. In 1805, he was admitted a student of the Royal Academy. In the following year, at the age of twenty-one, he pompously records his commencement:—"Ordered the canvas for my first picture (6 ft. by 4 ft.) of 'Joseph and Mary resting on the road to Egypt,' and on the 1st. October, 1806, setting my palette, and taking brush in hand, I knelt down and prayed to God to bless my career, to grant me energy to create a new era in art, and to rouse the people and patrons to a just estimate of the moral value of historical painting." Then, rising with calm gratitude, he tells how "looking fearlessly at his unblemished canvas, in a species of spasmodic fury he dashed down the first touch."

He afterwards describes his work on its completion: "The subject I had chosen was a pretty one, if poetically treated, and I had so treated it. In the centre was Joseph holding the child asleep; the ass on the other side; above were two angels regarding the group, and in the extreme distance the pyramids at the break of day. The whole was silently tender. (But where was his Mary, the principal figure?) The scenery divided interest with the actors. The colour was toned and harmonious. I had tried to unite nature and the antique. I never painted without nature and never settled my forms without the antique. I proceeded with the utmost circumspection, and I believe that it was rather an extra-

ordinary work for a first picture. It was an attempt to unite all parts of the art as a means of conveying thought, in due subordination. It had colour, light and shadow, impasto, handling, drawing, form and expression. It took me six months to paint, and when I saw it twenty-five years after I was astonished." Then he tells that his friends were divided as to the policy of exhibiting the picture, but that he sent it, and then worried himself into a fever "with those cursed torturing anxieties that are the bane of this mode of making your name known to your countrymen." He had furious dreams also about the fate of his picture, and he owns that he bored Fuseli, R.A., then the Keeper of the Academy, about it, till one day he was greeted by him with, "Wall, is it you? for your comfort then you are hung, be Gode; and d—d well too, though not in chains yet."

These extracts give an insight into the character and the restless and importunate vanity of the man, and are the key to his conduct through life. On the exhibition of his picture he went back to Plymouth for a season "and painted his friends at fifteen guineas a head, a good price, at which he soon got full employment;" and he candidly adds, "execrable as my portraits were, (I sincerely trust that not many survive), I rapidly accumulated money; not probably because my efforts were thought successful, even by my sitters, but more because my friends wished to give me a lift, and thought that so much enthusiasm deserved encouragement." This practice, however, he says advanced him and gave him confidence, and he recommends it to the young history painter. On his return to town he commenced his "Dentatus," a commission from Lord Mulgrave;

and after telling that he was puzzled to death to reconcile the antique forms with his anatomical knowledge in his conception of this figure, he by chance accompanied his friend Wilkie, who had obtained an order to see the Elgin marbles. In a fit of vain enthusiasm he finds that he has been pursuing the true Grecian road, and exclaims, "Here were the principles which the common sense of the English people would understand; here were the principles which I struggled for in my first picture with timidity and apprehension; here were the principles which the great Greeks in their finest time established; and here was I, the most prominent historical student, perfectly qualified to appreciate all this by my own determined mode of study." And then he tells us, "I drew at the marbles ten, fourteen, and fifteen hours at a time, holding a candle and my board in one hand and drawing with the other; and so I should have stayed till the morning, had not the sleepy porter come yawning in, to tell me it was twelve o'clock; and then I have often gone home cold, benumbed and damp, my clothes steaming up as I dried them; and so spreading my drawings on the ground, I have drank my tea at one o'clock in the morning with ecstasy, as its warmth trickled through my frame, and looked at my picture, and dwelt on my drawings, and pondered on the change of empires, and thought that I had been contemplating what Socrates looked at and Plato saw; and then lifted up with my own high urgings of soul, I have prayed God to enlighten my mind to discover the principles of those divine things, and then I have had inward assurances of future glory, and almost fancying divine influence in my room, have lingered to my mattress bed, and soon dozed into a rich balmy slumber."

If this is a true account of Haydon's mode of study and state of mind in his twenty-second year—if he thus fed his excited vanity, and thought that he was nourishing true genius by such extravagancies, his prospects in art and in life were already visionary; and it is all of a piece when soon after he chronicles that, feeling very hungry on his road to the City, he "went into Peel's Coffee-house for some soup. It was such an idle thing to do in the middle of the day, that I shrunk back blushing, for fear of meeting Michael Angelo's spectre crying, 'Haydon! Haydon! you idle rascal, is this the way to eminence?'" He was now at work upon his "Dentatus;" and he notes his progress from day to day:—"rose in a fever of anxiety and commenced my work—blotting out and painting in again—put my head in once again—went on with my head—improved my head—finished my flying drapery, thank God! at last I think it is not badly arranged." But Fuseli, who called upon him, thought otherwise, and saying it wanted support, with a bit of chalk drew a prop, for fear the *flying* drapery by its fall should break the leg of his "Dentatus."

Haydon's bane was his inordinate, insupportable vanity. Lord Mulgrave, who had given him a commission for the "Dentatus," was courteous to him, and invited him frequently to his table; but this was too much for his weak head. He says he talked more grandly to his artist friends (and we may be sure he did, as he owns it), and that he did not relish the society of the middle-classes; then he tells us—"My room began to fill with people of rank and fashion, and very often I was unable to paint, and did nothing but talk and explain. They all, however, left town at Christmas, and

I worked away very hard, and got on well, so that when they returned I was still the object of wonder; and they continually came to see that extraordinary picture by a young man who never had the advantages of foreign travel. Wilkie was for the time forgotten. At table I was looked at, selected for opinions, and alluded to constantly. 'We look to you, Mr. Haydon,' said a lady of the highest rank, 'to revive the art.' I bowed my humble acknowledgments, and then a discussion would take place upon the merit and fiery fury of 'Dentatus;' then all agreed that it was a fine subject, and then Lord Mulgrave would claim the praise of the selection. Then people would whisper, he has himself an antique head, and then they would look, and some one would differ. Then the noise the picture would make when it was out: then Sir George (Beaumont) would say, that he had always said, that a great historical painter would arise, and that I was he."

All this, the poor misguided painter says, he "believed as gospel truth." He believed that the production of his picture "must be considered as an epoch in English art." He sent it proudly to the Royal Academy, and was disgusted that it was hung in the centre of the ante-room. But those who remember the old Academy and the fine works which have hung on this very centre, will think that the young painter should have been happy that his second effort was promoted to so favourable a place, and that his work had been treated with so great consideration. But how could his high-flown excited hopes have been satisfied! His picture, when exposed to the public judgment, found its true level. The disappointed painter laid all to the Academy, who, he says, "deter-

mined to check him the moment he got in their power." Lord Mulgrave, who kindly paid him 200 guineas for the picture, was cold. Wilkie shrank from its defence. His painting-room was deserted. He felt like a marked man, and the Academy had done it all. Poor fellow! with some the lesson might have proved salutary, but it was not so with him, for he writes:—"Here was a work, the principles of which I could do nothing but develope for the remainder of my life, in which a resolute and visible attempt had been made to unite colour, expression, handling, light, shadow, and heroic form; and to correct the habitual slovenliness of the English in drawing based upon anatomical knowledge of the figure, wanting till now in English art; for West and Barry had but superficial knowledge. The first picture which had appeared, uniting the idea and the life, under the influence and guidance of the divine productions of Phidias, seen for the first time in Europe, and painted by the first artist ever permitted to draw from those remains; and this picture was ruined in reputation through the pernicious power of professional men, embodied by royalty for the advancement of works of this very description. I, the sincere devoted artist, was treated like a culprit, deserted like a leper, abused like a felon, and ridiculed as if my pretensions were the delusions of a madman. Yet these delusions were founded on common sense, on incessant industry, on anatomical investigation, and on a constant study of the finest works of the great masters of the world! This is, and has been the curse of European art for 250 years, ever since the establishment of those associations of vanity, monopoly, intrigue, and envy, called Academies; and

until they are reformed and rendered powerless, except as schools of study, they will be felt as an obstruction to the advancement of art."

In 1810 he began a third picture—"Lady Macbeth," a commission given to him some time previously by Sir George Beaumont who wished to befriend him; yet he managed to pick a quarrel with Sir George, and to be sadly, we think, in the wrong. He owns, "I was fearless, young, proud of a quarrel with a man of rank, which would help to bring me into notice:" a painful avowal, enough to make friends shy, and to keep men of rank aloof. But he afterwards admitted the folly of his conduct. Though he had by this quarrel forfeited his commission for the "Macbeth," he continued to work upon it, "resolving to make it the most wonderful work which ever issued from human hands." He was in debt and desperate. His father would assist him no further, and, "exasperated by the neglect of my family (we use his own words), tormented by the consciousness of debt, cut to the heart by the cruelty of Sir George, fearful of the severity of my landlord, and enraged at the insults of the Academy, I became furious. An attack upon the Academy and its abominations darted into my head." Thus instigated, with no higher motives, he turned upon the Academy, and published his attack in the *Examiner* newspaper, and "never (he says) since the art was established were its professors in such a hubbub of fury and rage. . . . From this moment, the destiny of my life may be said to have changed—my picture was caricatured, my name detested, my peace harassed; so great was the indignation at my impertinence, that all merit was denied to 'Macbeth,'" and he afterwards adds, that "West

went down and did his best, as president, to damn the picture in a crowded room:" a statement which we feel bound to say we believe to be without foundation with regard to West, and utterly inconsistent in our own experience with the conduct of any member. His friends remonstrated with him, reasoned calmly and affectionately on the course he had taken, and he admits that in moments of depression he often wished he had followed their sincere advice; and yet in full-blown vanity he adds,—"but then I should never have acquired that grand and isolated reputation, solitary and unsupported, which while it encumbers the individual with a heavy burthen, inspires him with vigour proportioned to the load."

In this crooked state of mind he began his large picture, "The Judgment of Solomon," while living in a small confined room, using his blankets or his table-cloth for drapery—suffering from sickness aggravated by dreadful necessities; painting, as he tells us, on one occasion till three o'clock in the morning from ten the morning before, he continued his work, alternating sorrows and suffering with intense enjoyments. But, "after the most dreadful application, influenced by an enthusiasm stimulated by despair almost to delirium, living for a fortnight upon potatoes because he would not cloud his mind with the fumes of indigestion, he broke down." His eyesight failed, and while he was in this sad state, his picture began to make a noise, and (we tell it in his own words) after what he had just before so hastily alleged of the president, "West called and was affected to tears at the mother. He said there were points in the picture equal to anything in the art;" and though we know that

West's income from the King had been just stopped, he generously sent Haydon a cheque for 15*l.*

When his "Solomon" was finished he sent it, not to the Academy, but to the Water-colour Exhibition at Spring Gardens, which then admitted oil paintings; and a prominent centre place was given to the work. He was fortunate. He sold it for 600 guineas, and the British Institution awarded it a premium of 100 guineas. He was raised from the depths of his despair, and was at once in the clouds. He paid his most pressing debts, "his table was covered with cards of fashion—of noble lords, dukes, baronets, literary men;" cold friends again held out their hands, and dinner invitations succeeded. Exultingly he writes,—"The success of 'Solomon' was so great and my triumph so great that had I died then, my name must have stood on record as a youth who had made a stand against the prejudices of a country, the oppression of rank, and the cruelty and injustice of two public bodies. It was a victory in every sense of the word." With some money in his pocket he started off to Paris with Wilkie, and enjoyed himself, seeing and commenting upon the great collection of works which then temporarily crowded the Louvre. But returning home, he soon after says in his journal that "not a single commission, large or small," followed his success. His local exhibitions of his picture were failures; a damp warehouse eventually became the resting-place of the "Solomon," and he breaks out, "Shame on those who have the power without the taste to avert such a fall; who let a work which was hailed as a national victory, rot into decay, and dirt and oblivion. But it will rise again, it will shine forth hereafter, and reanimate the energy of a new gene-

ration, when the falsehood of Germanism shall have ruined the school, and the rising youth are gasping for examples which may be safely imitated." Thirty years later, when he superintended the re-stretching of the canvas, his early work had by no means fallen in his esteem, for he exclaims, "I really am astonished by the picture, and so will the country be by-and-by." It is interesting to record that the work was, according to his own account, painted in oil, glazed in oil, varnished, and then oil rubbed in to prevent chill. It might be some gratification to Haydon's proud and wounded spirit, if he knew that this picture was purchased by Sir Edwin Landseer, his old pupil, and that it was one of those selected to represent his art at the International Exhibition of 1862; though it did not attract any especial notice or enthusiasm.

He had, before his journey to Paris, commenced his "Christ's Entry into Jerusalem," and he tells us "at this time my enthusiasm was intense. I held intercourse only with my art, and my great Creator. I shunned society; I looked upon myself as called to produce a great reform, and I devoted myself to it with the passionate self-seclusion of an ascetic." Such statements are, however, part of the exaggeration of Haydon's character, and must not be taken too literally; yet there is no doubt that he worked hard and enthusiastically upon his "Jerusalem," and that, as usual, his resources were soon exhausted; for we find that at the beginning of the year 1815, with large engagements to pay money, he had not a sixpence in his pocket. Still he clung to his easel, and worked incessantly; his application increasing his power, and encouraged "by per-

petual and irresistible urgings of future greatness," and by two commissions, on each of which advances were made to him. Then by these paroxysms of application, and long occasional fasting, his health became deranged, his eyes suffered, and he was unable to work. In 1816 he continued to labour upon the "Jerusalem," and in the following year he was still engaged on the same great work; and again suffering in health, he was assisted by a friend, and enabled to remove to a healthy house, with a handsome studio, at Lisson Grove. Here he was visited by beauty and fashion; and for a time, short indeed, basked in the rays of an illusive prosperity.

Haydon's art, his whole existence in fact, was illusory. He thought his talents should make him the pensioner of the State; and when advised to paint smaller and more saleable works, he said, "All my friends are advising me what to do, instead of advising the Government what to do for me." He would not yield the question of public support, as "he had made up his mind to bring that about by storm." Terribly hampered for the means to continue his large picture, he did not scruple to solicit, nay, to claim, pecuniary help from any who had the means, and who were, he thought, likely to assist him. It is perhaps surprising to find how much was generously given to him; and to learn the way in which he justifies himself:—"And now one word as to my applications, too frequent, alas! for pecuniary assistance. It would hardly be believed that I had brought myself to consider I had, by my public devotion to high art, a claim on all the nobility and opulent of the kingdom. This was no crime, and it was, perhaps, reasonable, but it was not delicate or manly. There can be no doubt I ought to

have been helped by the State; and I should have been if the Academy had not existed, which obstinately intrigued against a vote of money either to individuals or bodies where art was concerned." In such opinions we cannot concur. The manner and the repetition of his begging applications were such as no independent honest mind could have adopted.

In 1820, the "Jerusalem" was completed, and was exhibited at the Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly, and we have again his shout of triumphant success. Money he admits, too, came pouring in, and he kept paying off debts; but not fast enough, for his success brought a multitude of claims, though he received no less than 1,760*l.* in the season. Encouraged by this, he married, in 1821, a widow lady, to whom he had been for several years attached. His picture did not, however, find a purchaser, and a subscription set on foot to present it to the church, failed. Subsequently (in 1831) it was purchased for only 240*l.*, and sent to America.

He had, on the completion of the "Jerusalem," immediately commenced another great work, on a canvas 19 feet long by 15 feet high. His subject was—"The Raising of Lazarus," the conception of which rushed into his mind when looking over the prints in the British Museum. He was now, as ever, deeply in debt; yet harassed by duns and executions, he set to work, fitfully indeed, stirred by his love for his divine art; "if it were not for which," he says, "I should certainly go mad"—painting to-day, long and successfully, to-morrow hurrying over the town to put off, but for a few hours, and at a great sacrifice, his most importunate creditors. The moment and the action chosen by the painter for the Lazarus is in the text

43rd and 44th verses of the 11th chapter of Saint John: "And Jesus cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes." The gravestone has just been taken away; the two men, by whom it has been removed, in violent action and hiding their faces in their hands, draw back in haste and terror from the opened sepulchre. In the centre, contrasting with this action, Christ stands erect, the face calm, the body quietly poised, the right hand and arm raised above the head, as he exclaims, "Lazarus, come forth." Facing Christ, and occupying the left of the picture, Lazarus appears at the divine command, wrapt in the white graveclothes, and with his hands tears away the napkin bound about his face. Grouped immediately with Christ are the kneeling figures—Martha, facing the spectator, on his right hand; on his left in profile, Mary, her feet extending quite to the front line of the picture. Behind her, leaning forwards, stands St. John, with clasped hands; and in the extreme right, a group of nine well-conceived figures. On the left, but retired, the mother and father of Lazarus fill the canvas between him and Christ; and the corresponding group on the right is made up of two Jewish priests.

The first impression of the picture is imposing; the general effect powerful and well suited to the subject; the incidents and grouping well conceived; the colouring good, and in parts brilliant. Then the mind, at once fixing upon the chief figure, feels unsatisfied with the Christ. The head is in direct profile and heavy, the eye sleepy and wanting in due expression, and the attempt at calm dignity results in inanition. The drapery is clumsy

and loaded upon the right arm and shoulder. The hands are good and are well painted; but the feet, though also well drawn, seem hardly suited in action to the poise of the figure. On the whole, the Christ is weak; probably the weakest, though the chief figure, in the picture. The head of the Lazarus is finely conceived and painted; the mouth and general expression of the muscles of the face still retain the rigidity of death, but the eyes wide open, and fixed upon the Saviour, are filled with an expressive gaze of wonder. When commencing this head, the painter tells us he was arrested, and that with his mind struggling to regain its power he set to work, and scrawling about with his brush, he gave an expression to the eye of Lazarus. "I instantly got interested," he adds, "and before two I had put it in. My pupil, Bewick, sat for it, and, as he had not sold his exquisite picture of 'Jacob,' looked quite thin, and anxious enough for such a head." The Martha is certainly finely conceived; the face, almost colourless from emotion, is well and brilliantly painted, the feeling of sorrowing resignation beautiful; the whole action of the figure expressive of quiet, subdued grief. Haydon says, "The Martha is a complete specimen of my own style of art. For once I have realized my notions as to ideal and nature, colour and expression, surface and handling." The Mary is comparatively a failure; the figure clumsy, giving the idea of bigness; the head and shoulders very large, the left arm long; the expression of the face not reaching above a confused stare, but the drawing and colouring of the hands excellent, and the feet very good. The St. John is rather extravagant, both in action and expression; the latter unctuous and simpering, and somewhat

effeminate—the drapery, particularly the vest, well thrown, and well coloured and painted. The father and mother are good in expression and action, particularly the mother, for whom his washerwoman served as a model. The two Jews are contemptuously expressive without loss of dignity, and the group, including St. Peter, piled upon the cemetery wall, is well conceived—the action and expression good, and the colour and general effect brilliant.

The "Lazarus" comprises twenty figures, on a scale of about nine feet high; the composition is natural and original—no straining figures into attitudes to fit spaces or fill corners. Each has its appropriate action and place in the great story. Some parts possess high merits, and very painter-like qualities, with a peculiar luminous brilliancy of flesh colour unknown in the English School since Reynolds. Can we wonder that there are inequalities in this great work when we see the painter hurried on by his necessities—the enthusiasm and thought of to-day, damped and obliterated by the trials of the morrow. In March, 1823, his picture was exhibited, and he records, "It has made the greatest impression. No picture I ever painted has been so universally approved of." But the money taken for admission would hardly stop gaps from day to day. Haydon was arrested and thrown into prison, and his picture sold for 300*l*. It is at this day exhibited for sale at the Pantheon in Oxford Street. Would that we could say anything to promote the realization of the unhappy painter's prayer for his "Lazarus:"—"O God! grant that it may reach the National Gallery in a few years, and be placed in fair competition with the

Sebastiano del Piombo. I ask no more to obtain justice from the world."

On his release from the King's Bench Prison, Haydon tried portrait painting, but notwithstanding all his efforts he was reduced almost to actual want. He finished at this time a "Puck" and a "Silenus," and sketched several compositions for pictures; but he continued in great difficulties—how great, an entry made in his journal at the commencement of 1824 will show. How characteristic, too, it is of the man, and the sad trials under which he pursued his art!—"Completed my yesterday's work, and obliged to sally forth to get money, in consequence of the bullying insolence of a short, wicked-eyed, wrinkled, waddling, gin-drinking, dirty-ruffled landlady —poor old bit of asthmatic humanity! As I was finishing the fawn's foot, in she bounced, and demanded 4*l.* of me with the air of a demirep duchess. I irritated her by my smile, and turned her out and sat down quietly and finished my feet. Fielding should have seen the old devil." Such scenes, we may be sure, did not come singly, and use could hardly lessen their sad distractions. They must have led him to think and to moralize, for we find him noting, "I am not yet 40, and can tell of a destiny melancholy and rapturous, bitter beyond all bitterness, afflicting beyond all affliction, cursed, heart-burning, heart-breaking, maddening. Merciful God! that thou shouldest permit a being with thought and feeling to be so racked." And he finishes the following year (1825) with a description of his state, which is painfully sad:—"My fits continue. I am all fits—fits of work, fits of idleness, fits of reading, fits of walking, fits of Italian, fits of Greek, fits of Latin, fits of French, fits of

Napoleon, fits of the navy, fits of the army, fits of religion. My dear Mary's (his wife's) lovely face is the only thing that has escaped—a fit that never varies."

In 1826 he finished his "Venus appearing to Anchises," a commission; and after some scruples sent it to the Academy for exhibition. He notes that this gave much satisfaction; that he wished to be reconciled to the profession; and that with a stubborn heart he called upon the members to make peace, and was well received by all. He then began "Alexander taming Bucephalus," and in the following year his "Euclus"—both commissions—and was again thrown into prison for debt. He appealed to the public through the newspapers, and a public meeting was called and subscriptions raised to restore him to his art and his family. He was released, and then painted his "Mock Election" from a burlesque scene which he had witnessed in prison; and though it did not meet with a purchaser, he found a moderate success in its exhibition. He was now losing his enthusiasm—his trials and troubles began to tell. He was painting lesser subjects for bread, and wanted the excitement of the great works he had hitherto undertaken. He grew at last apathetic. Then he tried, as a companion picture to the "Mock Election," "Chairing the Member," and suddenly his hopes were again raised by the purchase of the former picture by the King: his condition should have been far from desperate, for the net receipts from these two pictures was 1,396*l.*

He had always spoken with disgust of portrait painting, for which neither art nor nature fitted him; but in 1829 he was again compelled to have recourse to it, and he makes this unprincipled note in his journal: "Finished

one cursed portrait, have only one more to touch, and then I shall be free. I have an exquisite gratification in painting portraits wretchedly. I love to see the sitters look as if they thought, Can this be Haydon's painting? I chuckle. I am rascal enough to take their money and chuckle more." He at this time made a sketch for his "Napoleon at St. Helena," and finished his "Punch;" a subject we should think having less relation to the grand historic than even portraiture. In 1830 he was again arrested. He had commenced, while surrounded by distress, a large subject—his "Zenophon," and on his release began it on a smaller canvas; but he was without means, the butcher impudent, the tradesmen all insulting, when Sir Robert Peel gave him a commission for the "Napoleon," but having named what we should think a liberal price, he offended the minister by expressing dissatisfaction on being paid the sum he had named.

Stirring political times now arrived. Haydon was much excited by the Reform agitation, and under this influence painted "Waiting for the Times," which is well known by the mezzotint engraving. In 1832, encouraged by Earl Grey, he commenced a sketch for the Reform Banquet, for which his lordship afterwards gave him a commission for 500 guineas. During the greater part of that and of the following year, he was busily engaged with all the great men of the Reform party, painting their portraits into his picture and journalizing their gossip. He was happy over his work, "a more delightful work an artist never had," when in the midst of all he was arrested, but was soon released by his generous friends. His painting contained ninety-seven heads, all portraits. When finished he exhibited it, but the exhibition did not

pay. He was again in difficulties and again assisted by his friends; the Duke of Sutherland giving him a commission to complete his sketch of Cassandra.

His troubles seem to have culminated in 1835. "The agony of my distresses (he says) is really dreadful; for this year I have principally supported myself by the help of my landlord, and by pawning everything of any value I have left, until at last it has come to my clothing: a thing, in all my wants, I never did before." He was reduced also to try to supply his daily wants by his brush; small pictures were rapidly finished, and repeated, and sold for what they would fetch. A subscription raffle amounting to 840*l.* was, however, got up for his "Zenophon," which was won by the Duke of Bedford, who presented it to the Russell Institution. In 1836 he was prominent before the committee of the House of Commons on the constitution of the Royal Academy, of which body he was again a bitter opponent; and about the same time commenced his career as a public lecturer, and for the next two or three years, found engagements which materially assisted in the support of his family. He lectured in London, Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, Hull and other large towns. He met with much encouragement, and, while he gratified his love of display, had also the satisfaction of asserting his own views about art.

State employment had been the dream of Haydon's life: he had for years persistently teased every Minister who would listen to him. He had suggested the decoration of the great hall at the Admiralty, and of other public buildings; but especially of the House of Lords, for which he made a series of six designs. He said, "I

first planned the decoration of the Lords in 1812, made sketches in 1819, and put them before all the Ministries in succession down to Sir Robert Peel's." When therefore the opportunity arrived, and a Royal Commission was issued to carry out the decoration of the New Houses of Parliament—which he claimed as his own suggestion—he was greatly excited; and in 1842 he eagerly, but not without some misgivings, entered into the cartoon competition. His drawings finished, he shouts out—and this at the mature age of 56 years—"My cartoon is up, and makes my heart beat, as all large spaces do and ever have done,—difficulties to conquer, victories to win, enemies to beat, the nation to please, the honour of England to be kept up. Huzza! huzza! huzza! and one cheer more." But great trials and troubles followed; his competition was unsuccessful; the object for which he had all his life contended so ardently was missed: his powers had failed, a life of contention and trouble had at last had its unvarying result, and in the midst of his distress he wrote to the secretary whom he claimed as his old pupil and friend. "I appeal to the Royal Commission, to the First Lord, to you the secretary, to Barry the architect, if I ought not to be indulged in my hereditary right to do this, viz., that when the houses are ready, cartoons done, colours mixed, and all at their posts, I shall be allowed, *employed or not employed*, to take the *first* brush, and dip it in the *first* colour, and put the *first* touch on the *first* intonaco. If that is not granted, I'll haunt every noble lord of you, till you join my distracted spirit on the banks of the Styx. Keep that in view, if you regard my peace of mind, my ambition, my pride, and my glory." He did not compete at the second exhibition,

but his heart was filled with the desire for employment. He says, "I hanker after lime, and have begun my third cartoon for it, and have been busy preparing lime. If ever an artist was fit for fresco I am. I have always done everything at once."

Meanwhile he was painting for his daily bread, he may be said to have almost lived upon his "Napoleon at St. Helena," which he repeated over and over again; also "Napoleon in his Bedroom;" "Meditating at Marengo;" "In Egypt;" "Musing at the Pyramids;" and we know not in how many other moods. In 1844 he notes, "I have painted nineteen Napoleons, thirteen of them 'At Saint Helena;'" and he adds, "by heavens! how many more." And soon after we find that "he sent home," we suppose to order, "six 'Napoleons Musing,' at five guineas each, got orders for three more at six guineas each;" and again "began and finished 'A Napoleon' in two hours and a half, the quickest I ever did." Still he worked on; the smell of paint he declared was incense to his nostrils, his palette the only real source of happiness; and in 1845 he exhibited at the Royal Academy, "Uriel and Satan." Gradually the cherished hope of employment by the Royal Commission, to which he had so tenaciously clung, abandoned him; he felt that the Commission ignored his efforts and his claims, and he tried yet another struggle. He determined to complete his six designs for the decoration of the House of Lords, as a sort of justificatory appeal. Overwhelmed with difficulties, he finished the first—"The Banishment of Aristides"—to show the injustice of democracy; and the second (which now hangs in the Pantheon), "Nero playing his Lyre, while Rome is burning," to prove the heartlessness of des-

potism; and he then made a private exhibition of these two works, which was, alas! an utter failure. He cleared out his exhibition with a loss of 111*l*. He had a rival under the same roof in the renowned "Tom Thumb," and he said, "Next to a victory is a skilful retreat; I marched out before General Tom Thumb, a beaten but not a conquered exhibitor."

But he was conquered. He had struggled through appalling difficulties. He had known troubles of every complexion; but hitherto his vanity had been invulnerable and had sustained him. He was now deeply wounded in spirit; young men were selected for the work which he had made the ambition of his life, and he was contemptuously passed by. Yet involved in debt, mortified and depressed, he commenced the third picture, "Alfred and the Jury." But the struggle had become too hard; "he sat staring at his picture like an idiot, his brain pressed down by anxiety:" and so his mind gave way; and, without warning (unless it is to be found in the above letter to the Commission), on the 22nd June, 1846, he made this sad entry in his journal, "God forgive me! amen. Finis. B. R. Haydon. 'Stretch me no longer on the rack of this rough world.'—LEAR." And then he died by his own hand.

There can be no doubt of Haydon's true love of his art: it was his ruling passion. He followed it with a fitful enthusiasm, unchilled by the most severe trials; which it would be difficult to say were not, in their excitement, an essential stimulant to his progress and suited to his irritable nature. It may be doubted if under more tranquil conditions he would have done more. He seemed at times to commence his pictures without any plan or forethought, and to begin painting in the fervour of his first

conception, without even drawing in; how, then, can it be wondered that the gross faults they exhibit were often very severely commented on? The "Lion Hunt" is a case in point; the drawing of the principal figure, and of the horse on which he rides, is most careless and incorrect; the head of the man is far too big for his body, the arms too weak for the lower limbs, the horse much too small to carry the man, who sits quite on its neck, and is so evidently too heavy for the animal, that it is quite weighed down in the hind quarters, not by the attack of the lion, but by the weight of the warrior. Like its rider the horse has too big a head, which is moreover fitted on to a short neck that the lion-killer's face may not be hidden; it has opened its jaws so wide as to include nearly half the neck of the lion within its teeth, while, with the hind legs almost paralyzed, it stands firmly enough on one fore leg to be able to twist the other over the lion's back and to place it on the opposite flank. Another rider comes up in such hot haste to the aid of the first, that he has either run his horse and himself against the trunk of a tree, or else Haydon thought he had had trouble enough with the heads of one warrior and one horse, and deliberately blotted out the other two by painting the trunk completely across them; added to this the whole work is heavy and coarse, without style and without execution.

Again, let us look at one of his smaller works, "Punch on May-day" (Nat. Gal. 602). This picture shows Haydon's coarseness of conception and taste, his want of drawing and his off-hand composition. The character and expression of his figures are more caricature than art, the incidents most commonplace, and with the

most obvious contrasts. Thus Punch performing on one side and beating his wife is contrasted on the opposite by a wedding cortége, where the bridegroom is seen through the window of the carriage, toying with his not very youthful bride. This again is contrasted with a funeral procession; the black undertaker's men, with their white trappings for one who has died unmarried, opposed to a black servant behind the bridal carriage, exulting in his enormous favour. In front of the wedding-party is a group of chimney-sweeps and Jack-in-the-green dancing in all their finery and idleness, while on the other side Industry, barefooted, is keeping an apple-stall. A soldier contrasts with a sailor, a countryman with a pick-pocket: there are, in fact, as many incongruous incidents as could well be brought together on a single canvas.

Haydon, while continually parading his want of means to live, could find money to animadvert on the errors of the portrait painters of his day, in advertisements in the *Times* of the "Tiptoe-school," as he satirically called them. Yet he made great mistakes in his own perspective; this is very apparent in the circular campanile of Marylebone Church in the background of the Punch, which wholly disagrees with the perspective line of the cornice, as do the lines of the two bow-fronts of the houses near it. Some excuse may be made that this is not the walk of art he originally chose, and that we must not compare him as to completeness with his contemporaries, Mulready, Wilkie, or Leslie: perhaps also the picture was produced under adverse circumstances; and we are bound to add, with all its faults, it has a vigour of handling and richness of colour that speak of the true artist.

Such were the general characteristics of Haydon's

art, and we are prepared to admit his merits as a painter. He was a good anatomist and draughtsman; his colour was effective, his treatment of his subject and conception original and powerful; but his works have a hurried and incomplete look; his finish is coarse, sometimes woolly, and not free from vulgarity. His power and rapid execution, his aptitude to work on a large scale, and other qualities, fitted him for employment in the decoration of the Houses of Parliament; and he had also claims upon the consideration of the Commissioners. Men with far less qualifications were selected, and we think that to him especially, as well as to some others, the Commissioners did great injustice in sheltering themselves behind a competition, and thus dexterously managing to evade a responsibility with regard to the selection of artists of established reputation, which they were bound to have assumed: but of this we purpose to speak more at large in a future chapter.

William Etty, R.A., was another man of mark in the British School, who formed a style of his own, which, amidst much discouragement in the beginning of his career, he persevered in until he arrived at great excellence; introducing a class of subjects which had hitherto been but little attempted, or attempted very imperfectly by our native painters. In one view of his labours he cannot be said to have greatly influenced the school, since he had but one or two followers, and these did not inherit their master's talent; thus the apparent result of his works has not been large. Yet his influence on the students of his time was really great; as must be that of every earnest and patient labourer who really loves his work and is able to attain mastery in it.

Etty was born on the 10th March, 1787, at York, where his father was a baker, and also owned a mill. He demonstrated his love for art very early by defacing every plain surface. His schooling was short, and he mastered little more than reading and writing; but he was piously taught by his parents, who were Methodists. As a boy he was of a reserved and shy, yet affectionate, disposition. In 1798, when in his twelfth year only, he was apprenticed to a printer at Hull, and notwithstanding hard work during long hours, he managed to nourish his love of drawing, conscientiously drudging on during seven years, without giving up the hope of becoming a painter. Then, his printer's work done, an uncle who had settled in London, invited him to town, and assisted him in the study he had so zealously commenced. We know, for he was proud to tell us, that his labours during his apprenticeship made future work light to him, and that commencing art late only stimulated him to make up for lost time. In 1807, when in his twentieth year, he was admitted a student in the Royal Academy. He was from the beginning one of the most constant in attending the schools, and when he passed from the antique into the life school, he became wholly absorbed in the study of the nude, and permanently formed his style as a flesh painter; for when he had arrived at a proficiency in the study of the figure that qualified him for admission to paint from the life, he took with avidity to the use of the brush, and ever after *painted* his studies; thus he gained a power over the imitation of flesh, both as to colour and texture, beyond that of any other artist of our school.

Traditionally, his progress was slow,—so much so that his fellow-students were rather inclined to say,

"poor Etty!" and to think that he had mistaken his vocation; but his self-confidence never flagged: he went perseveringly onward in the course he had prescribed to himself, and attained such facility and perfection by his persistence, that as new students surrounded him they began to regard him with veneration, and his studies with great admiration; and, so far as the laws allowed, to imitate his practice. Always among them, nightly and every night during the school sessions, seated with them at their studies, gathering frequently a little party at his home in Buckingham Street to drink tea and to chat over art matters, it is no wonder that his talents and his habits made him a great favourite, and a model for imitation. His first inclination was to paint landscape; he then tried the heroic. In the uncertainty of his aim, he was attracted by the works of Lawrence, and in 1808 became his pupil, by the liberal help of his uncle. His first attempt did not meet with encouragement. He was an unsuccessful competitor for the Royal Academy medals. His works sent for exhibition were returned to him, and it was not till 1811 that he gained a place on the walls of the Exhibition.

Etty's brush in some degree supplanted the crayon, and a great facility in its use became the characteristic of the painters who immediately succeeded Etty. Some of the older members were inclined to disagree with this mode of study, and when, on his election as a member, Etty still continued to frequent the schools as usual, they thought it, to say the least, irregular. But his habits were too confirmed to change, even if he had not been thoroughly convinced of the value of the practice. Hence, almost to the end of his life, he was

as constant in attendance as in the days of his student-ship. In his studies in the schools he seemed to play rather than to labour, so easy was his brush, and such beautiful colour seemed to flow from it, as if accidentally. This is visible in his studies merely commenced and laid in, as well as in those he had most completed. His practice was very simple. He usually drew in his figure with white chalk or charcoal, on a raw millboard, which he then inked in and took home to prepare by merely rubbing size over it. The next evening in the school, he dead-coloured his study in the broadest and simplest manner, taking great care to mark in the relief of the figure from the ground at those points where it was visible in nature, by a close appreciation of the light and dark of the contrast; and these points he constantly kept in view, and renewed as he proceeded, only rubbing them over with some general uniting tint to form the background when the study was completed. These contrasts of dark upon light and light upon dark, or of flesh upon colour, of such value for relief and about which he was so careful, are still to be seen in most good studies from his hand; although it is to be regretted that few remain in an entirely genuine state—many having been altered and completed *pictorially!* for the dealers, by painters who lent themselves to such a practice.

He proceeded to finish his studies by passing over the dead colour a glaze of some brown pigment (asphaltum in early days, latterly we think bone brown), dashing in dexterously bold touches of lake in parts—in parts, ultramarine for greys, and then painting his white, slightly charged with Indian red, into the glaze; often

with his scrubbing brush (he loved an old and well-worn hog-tool) drawing in touches of pure madder here and there in the finishing, producing great brilliancy of effect in his studies; and by his dexterous execution, preserving a nicety of tone, beautiful pure tints, and very tender gradations. This is written from remembrance of his manner of working. In his own words, as given in his life by Gilchrist (vol. i. p. 58), it is a little different, yet substantially the same. He writes thus:—"Resolution. First night, correctly *draw* and outline the figure only. Second night, carefully paint in the figure with black and white and Indian red, for instance. The next, having secured with copal, glaze, and then scumble in the bloom. Glaze into shadows, and touch on the lights carefully—and it is done." By his rapid execution he kept his colour pure and unmuddled, never teazing the tints; and from painting so constantly by gaslight, he became accustomed to great breadth of light and shade.

The subjects which he adopted were of a voluptuous character, and arose somewhat out of the nature of his studies, varied by his love of poetry, fairy, and classic lore: such as "Perseus and Andromeda," "Hero and Leander," the "Syrens," "Sabrina," &c., mostly chosen with a view to the introduction of the nude. Even when his theme was from history the same feeling prevailed: as in the "Cleopatra," "The Storm," from the Psalms, and "The Eve of the Deluge." Such he delighted to paint. Above all, he delighted in the beauty of women. He was used to say that, "as all human beauty was concentrated in woman, he would dedicate himself to painting her." His first picture exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1811, was "Antiope rescued by Telemachus from the Wild

Boar." His first which gained him reputation was "Cleopatra sailing down the Cydnus," now in the possession of Lord Taunton; and to which Leslie refers when he says, "One morning he woke famous, after the opening of the Exhibition." This was in the spring of 1821, when this picture was given to the world. Let us examine it, for it was well suited to Etty's powers. In it he has carried his scale of colour to the verge of gaudiness. The composition is a little too scenic. The flesh painting differs from the Venetian in that it is completed at once from nature, and painted into a glaze rather than glazed. The Cleopatra lies recumbent in the centre of the composition, in loveliness unrobed—the lovely colour of the queen made more beautiful by its contrast with the dark skin of an attendant eunuch. Such contrasts in the colour of his flesh will be found in most of his works, and add greatly to their richness. The same treatment occurs again in this picture, in the varied hues of the water-nymphs and river-god in the foreground, and between the male and female attendants, the amorini which hover over the group, &c. From painting direct from nature Etty was apt to introduce some of the false individualities of common life, and the bad proportions of his models; but there was always a superadded grace and style even in their faultiness. The "Cleopatra" is traditionally said to have been painted with a large addition of wax to the medium, and has suffered much since it was first executed. Nevertheless, even now the flesh painting maintains as happy a medium between the silvery hue and the rosy as it is possible to achieve.

But Etty was not content to remain a painter of cabinet-sized pictures. He possessed a strong feeling

for the heroic, and early set himself a great task—that of painting a series of pictures of heroic subjects, with figures the size of life. Two years after his fame was initiated by the exhibition of the "Cleopatra," the president, Lawrence, bought his "Pandora crowned by the Seasons," a work which confirmed his talent, and won his admission to the Associateship of the Royal Academy; and now he determined to begin what he had some time contemplated—the large works by which he hoped to win still higher fame. He commenced with "The Combat—Woman Pleading for the Vanquished." The subject represents two combatants just at the crisis of their struggle. The younger is wounded and forced onto his knees, his broken sword at his feet, his long hair in the grasp of his terrible adversary, who is about to give him the death-stroke. A woman, rushing forward, throws herself at the feet of the victor; clasping him, in the energy of her appeal for mercy—by voice, by look, by action—she restrains him from vengeance.

Here are all the materials for a noble picture, and finely has the painter availed himself of them. The forms are heroic; the drawing is grand and large; there is not the slightest appearance of mere posed models; no pause in the action; the muscles are in full play, starting with the energy of the strife. Those of the chest and abdomen of the vanquished man, drawn up by the arms raised over his head to clutch the wrist that has seized him, are finely understood. The drapery also is well studied; the linen garment of the overthrown combatant is stamped under the feet of the victor, and by the passing action of the struggle is drawn into the most rigid tension, while that of his enemy is flying loose

with the rapid motion of the fight. But fine as the drawing is, it is by the beauty of his colour that Etty made his mark in the British School. Here again we have his principle of contrast introduced in the flesh of the three figures—the victor with the browned hue of a manhood passed in heroic exercises; the vanquished, younger and fiercer, pale with his wounds and with the overhanging vengeance; and both contrasting with the pearly hue of the interceding woman. The modelling and painting of the flesh are very fine, and place Etty high as a colourist in a school which is at least a school of colour. In this picture he was the inventor, as well as the painter, of his story.

In the next of this series of heroic works, Etty took his subject from the Scriptures, and treated it with great originality, and in a manner unlike to any of his predecessors in art. To show that he was prepared to meet difficulties, he chose a continuous action—a drama as it were, in three acts, and requiring three separate canvases to give its beginning, middle, and end. The theme he chose was the delivery of the Jewish people from the armies of Holofernes by the hand of Judith. The scene, from the nature of the story, is at night, and this (as two pictures of the series are in the open air) places difficulties in the way of colour that the painter has most ingeniously overcome. The arrangement is after the manner of the old triptychs; the principal subject being in the centre, the two secondary subjects arranged to form the wings. The story of Judith's heroism is too well known to need repeating; the way the painter has treated it is alone interesting. In the centre picture Judith is preparing to execute her terrible vengeance

upon the destroyer of her kindred. She is alone with Holofernes in his tent. There he lies stretched naked in drunken impotence on his couch; the vessels of his carouse lie empty around. Judith, in the front, stands appealing for help to her God. Perhaps the attitude may be taxed as statuesque: but consider the terrible moment represented! At the risk of her own life, and of her maiden honour, dearer to her than life, she has vowed to rid her people of their malignant enemy. The moment for the attempt is come: the sword of the victim is in her raised right hand, the left gradually gathers his long black hair in her grasp, that she may strike more steadily and more surely; the slightest cry —a groan even—the writhing of her victim in the death-struggle, may bring the watching soldiery upon her: a thin wall of canvas only is between them. She prays for help, and putting her trust in the Most High, gathers strength for the performance of her vow. Lighted by a lamp, the gloom of the tent looks obscure and terrible. Rich arms are grouped around, steel and gold inlaid; the hangings, the fruits and golden vessels of the banquet, the spread skins of the tiger and the bear, the dim blue sky of the East, seen out of an opening of the tent, with one lone star shining—these all tend to aid the richness of the colouring and the effectiveness of the grouping. On the right of this picture, the wing represents the episode of the maiden waiting for her mistress. It is as finely treated as the centre. The woman is alone amid the rude soldiery, who should have watched; but the Lord has sent on them a deep sleep. There they stand, leaning on their massive spears, sleeping beside the palm-trees under

which the tent is spread. And, seated at their feet, her back towards them, unwitting whether they sleep or watch, is the pale, anxious, listening maid. Is the deed done? She hears a stir within the tent. Hardly does she dare to turn her head—her fingers rise to her lip with a spontaneous hush! Will the soldiers hear? Will her mistress succeed, or must they both die? The next moment will decide; longer delay would be as fatal as failure, for the morn is rising grey over the distant town, and the watch-fires pale in its light. And in the left-hand picture we see that the next moment has been decisive. Judith is rushing from the tent with the head of the oppressor in her grasp. The courage which supported her in the dreadful moment has partly given way with the completion of her intent. She rushes out past the sleeping guards; the maid, starting to her knees, looks at her noble mistress as one inspired: as one whose deed shall be sung with those of Deborah and of Jael, the deliverers of her race. In the next instant they will depart, guided by the star and the watch-fires, to their mountain home.

There is fine drawing in these three pictures, although they are more especially pictures of colour. The central figure of Judith is grand in action; the maid in the right-hand picture particularly fine in expression. The action of the Judith in the left-hand picture is rather too violent, the head too much turned round; but the sleeping guards—sleeping as they stand—are particularly grand and characteristic. Designed as they were before Layard had laid bare the buried slabs of Nineveh, Etty seemed to have had a singular prevision of these sculptures. The same simple massive grandeur is in both

works, and they carry us back to the remote age when Assyria oppressed the people of God. But it is to their colour that these works owe their special grandeur. The principal picture, with all its gorgeous accessories, has already been described. The painter has finely brought his largest and brightest light into contrast with his deepest shade, by the shadow from the falling arm of Holofernes thrown on the sheet on which he lies; while the contrast of the strongest colour in the picture is also made with the brightest light, by the same drapery in contact with the red skirt of Judith. The side pictures are cleverly lighted by the lamp from within the tent through one of the raised folds, and thus the warm colour of the light from within is happily contrasted with the cold colour of the outer night just illumed with the breaking morn. The general hue is lurid and well suited to the subject; the execution very varied: wholly different from the solidity and heaviness of modern Continental schools, and full of the variety of impasto of thick and thin painting—of glazing and transparent colour, that show the painter a perfect master of his means.

There is yet another of these large works that should be mentioned, as in most respects it is the best of the series. The subject is also from the Scriptures—"Benaiah, he slew two lion-like men of Judah"—a composition of three figures, like the "Combat." It is full of vigorous action, but very different from the former; far richer in colour, and, saving one or two faults of proportion, finer even in drawing. One of the men of Moab is already slain; the staff of his spear broken, he lies prostrate on the ground, his body finely foreshortened, his shield trampled under the feet of the

conqueror, who has his companion also down, and his hand uplifted to smite him to death. Nothing can be finer than the way in which Benaiah seizes his adversary's uplifted sword-arm: he literally grips the bone; in a moment the sword must fall from the paralyzed limb. The bend of the body also, under the backward pressure of the grasp, is exceedingly fine and full of knowledge; the action of the Benaiah is good, but there is a faultiness about the length of the thighs, arising partly from Etty's having seen his model from too near a point of view, and partly from the action chosen, which adds all the length of the gluteal muscles to one thigh, and makes the other appear shorter from their separation from it. Here again we have the contrasts of colour in the three figures; and again the conquered is the palest; thus heightening the pallor of the overthrown by the contrast with the embrowned hue of the conqueror. The background is a daylight sky, and the white Etty loves to introduce to give richness to his colouring, is in the fleecy clouds hanging in the blue summer sky.

It must be remembered that Etty painted these great works without a commission, and with small hopes of a purchaser. Martin, the painter, himself not troubled with wealth, bought the "Combat," it is said, for 200*l.*, a sum small in those days,—ridiculous in our own, when one of Etty's cabinet pictures, "Perseus and Andromeda," has realized 1,500*l.*; but it was highly to Martin's honour to have appreciated his brother painter's talent, when the rich and the titled overlooked it; and it is a great satisfaction that this, with the other noble pictures we have described, has found a fitting resting place in the Royal Scottish Academy.

"Benaiah" was the culminating work of the series; in it Etty evinced his greatest power, both as a draughtsman and a colourist. In the "Syrens," though a fine picture, there was evidence of a decline; and the triptych from the life of "Joan of Arc," finished in 1847, showed how much disease and physical weakness had told upon him: how much the size of the canvas and the mere physical labour were beyond his failing powers.

But these great works were spread over a series of years, during which he produced numerous pictures of cabinet size, replete with beauty and poetry. Sometimes the theme he chose was such as to require strong and gorgeous colour, which he always brought in the most masterly manner into an harmonious whole. Such are "Youth at the Prow and Pleasure at the Helm." "Cymocles on the Idle Lake," &c. Sometimes the subjects called for a more solemn treatment, and became in his hands pictures of tone; where, with an ever present sense of colour, there was little of its actual presence: such as the picture in the Manchester Institute of the "Storm" from the 104th Psalm—"They that go down to the sea in ships and transact their business in the great waters, these same see the glory of the Lord and His wonders in the great deep, for at His word the stormy wind ariseth," &c. Another picture of this class is the "Hylas carried away by the Nymphs." A greyish-green is here the prevailing hue, and the flesh, the only warm colour opposed to it, except the golden vase which Hylas drops when his beautiful fates hurry him away.

It cannot be said, however, that Etty's talents, and the beauties so visible in his works, nor even their fine colour (a quality that, as seizing the eye, is more

readily appreciated by the uninstructed than those which appeal to the mind) won the painter present fame or profit. We have told the purchase-money of his "Combat;" it was three years after this noble picture was painted before he was elected to the full honours of the Academy, and it was quite late in his life before his pictures began to realize good prices; and even then more fell to the dealers than to the painter. Meanwhile, there were other causes than a want of perception of their merits that prevented his pictures being sought after by the public. Though himself a particularly pure-minded man, with a most chivalrous respect for women, it must be allowed that many of his pictures were of a very voluptuous character, and clashed with the somewhat prudish temper of the age. There has always been a stronger objection to the nude figures of the painter, than to the more tangible works of the sculptor; this had to be slowly overcome. It was difficult to tolerate such works from a living artist, in pictures in their first glow of beauty and freshness—unspoiled with age and fiddle-brown varnish; so that those who saw no objection to cover their walls with such subjects as "Lot and his Daughters," "David and Bathsheba," or "Joseph and the wife of Potiphar," if reputed to be from the hand of a Guido or Caracchi, could not tolerate the nude from a native painter, even when the subject itself was unobjectionable.

Though a great student of nature, Etty's imitation was ever general rather than individual: perhaps no one painted flesh more largely from nature than he did; but how unlike it is to the microscopic detail of Denner, or the ivory smoothness of Vanderwerf. Of his treatment of flesh, besides those pictures already mentioned, the

"Venus descending," the property of Mr. Young of Ryde, the "Perseus and Andromeda" of Mr. Huth's collection, the "Cupid sheltering his Darling" in the Sheepshanks', and the "Wife of Candaules" in the Vernon Galleries, may be examined as fine examples. His landscape, although but an accessory and background to his groups, is treated with the same largeness of imitation; no details are given, but the happiest rendering of the general colour or tone of nature in true accord with the feeling of the subject. Thus, in the "Eve of the Deluge," the great rolling clouds, laden with judgment on the "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God," not only add richness to the dancing group, but are truly indicative of the coming storm, sending cool breezes before it, stirring the floating draperies of the dancers, whose garments are lighted by that rich glow which irradiates the foreground when the heavy grey clouds are rising on the opposite hemisphere. The landscape to the "Hylas," the "Storm," the "Bathers," and numerous other works, is broad, simple, and truly effective. When his collected works, 130 in number, were exhibited in his honour at the Society of Arts, in June, 1849, he came up to London to be present at the exhibition, and was much moved by the congratulations of his friends. In answer to our inquiries, he then pointed to his "Hero and Leander," as his favourite and best work.

Early in his career Etty paid a short visit to Italy. In 1814, assisted by his brother, he set out on a long contemplated journey to see the Continental schools. He reached Paris, and crossed the Alps to Florence; but weak health and an accidentally sprained knee, formed

an excuse for his return within three months, which may rather be attributed to depressed spirits and a touch of home sickness. In 1822 he paid a more lengthened visit, and during his eighteen months' stay, saw Rome, Florence, Naples, and Venice, and copied some of the great works of the Italian school, particularly the Venetian. In 1824 he was elected an associate of the Royal Academy, and in 1828 a full member; and he then commenced the series of large pictures we have described. From 1826 to 1848 he lived in Buckingham Street, Adelphi. Then his health failing, he retired to his own city of York, to which he was fondly attached; and there he died, 13th November, 1849, and was buried in a quiet corner of the churchyard of St. Olave, almost within the shadow of the old Cathedral he loved so well.

He had realized about 17,000*l.* by his art, to which the sale of his sketches and materials after his death added 5,000*l.* more. In person Etty was short and thick-set, with somewhat massive features, deeply scarred with smallpox, a face expressive of great benevolence, and a head large—disproportionately large indeed—but tending to a look of power. Slow in speech and slow and measured in action, rather increased in late years by an asthmatic affection; of a kindly and gentle nature, and of extreme simplicity of character. Such is our recollection of Etty, and we are told further, that his tender nature was shown by his repeatedly falling in love with one fair object after another; which we can well believe, though he was in his habits decidedly a bachelor, and he died unmarried.

CHAPTER VI

TABLEAUX DE GENRE.—WILKIE, MULREADY, AND LESLIE.

Rise of this Art in England—Its domestic Character and true Aims—Illustrated in the Works of three eminent Artists—*David Wilkie, R.A.*—His early Life—Student at the Trustees' Academy, Edinburgh—Paints his Pitlassie Fair—Subject described—Then tries some Portraits—Starts for London—Admitted to the Royal Academy Schools—His patient Studies—*William Mulready, R.A.*—His first Art-attempts and early Teaching—Studies at the Academy—Makes rapid Progress—Marries—His first Pictures—*Charles Robert Leslie, R.A.*—His Birth and Boyhood—Intended for a Bookseller—Will be a Painter—Fortune favours his Desire—Comes to England—Devotes himself to Study—Opinions upon Teaching—Critical Comparison of the Genius of these three Painters—Their distinguishing Characteristics—Early Attempts in historic Art—Their different Modes of Painting described—And varied Choice of Subject—Remarks on Leslie's Sancho and the Duchess—And other Works—Mulready's Tendency to combative Subjects—His simple domestic Incidents—Development of his Style—Wilkie's little Sense of Beauty—Want of Elegance, Character, and Humour common to the three—But in different degrees—Their relative Merits as Colourists—Their Modes of Painting—And Influence of Continental Art upon them.

In the English school, pictures of this class may be said to take their rise from its great founder, Hogarth, whose works were of cabinet size, and of a dramatic, rather than historic tendency. After his death, although small pictures were occasionally painted by Zoffany, Hamilton, Peters, and others, yet the general efforts of our figure painters, stimulated by the example of Barry, West, and Copley, were for a time directed to works of the scale of life, and to subjects of a religious or historic character, rather than to those domestic and familiar incidents from

home life and the affections, those cabinet illustrations of poets and writers, which in France have obtained the name of *Tableaux de Genre*, and which we, from want of a better, have hitherto consented to call by the same name. It was, however, soon apparent that our countrymen cared little for battle pieces—for canvases covered with war and glory, until lately almost the staple material of history; nor were they desirous of seeing the sacred subjects of their creed surrounding them in their every-day life. In England the churches are not open to the painter's art, and the burgesses and aldermen of our provincial towns were little likely to forego the pleasures of the table at the guild and corporation feasts, that the walls of the guild-halls might be decorated at the expense of their good cheer. Hence the zeal for producing works of heroic size could not be expected to endure, since, even were he disposed to forego the due reward of his labours, the artist could find no place to display them; and when young men, in the first enthusiasm of art, have laboured to complete important pictures of a sacred or historic character, they have had to turn them to the wall of the studio, a life-long encumbrance and annoyance, or to roll them up and consign them to the cock-loft or the attic. It was soon found that pictures to suit the English taste must be pictures to live by; pictures to hang on the walls of that home in which the Englishman spends more of his time than do the men of other nations, and loves to see cheerful and decorative. His rooms are comparatively small, and he cannot spare much wall-space for a single picture. His eye, too, must be pleased before his mind, and colour is to him one of the first sources of gratification.

Although pictures of the Dutch school were favourites with English collectors, who admired them for their rare technical qualities, their brilliant colouring and great completeness, they were low and grovelling in subject, and void of any expression but such as is gross and sensual, mostly without beauty or any appeal to the higher sentiments; and hence they were unfitted for the study of our rising artists, except for their fine qualities of execution and composition. Thus the painters who, at the commencement of the present century, sought to introduce a class of pictures suited to English tastes, chose their subjects from domestic life; either illustrations of our poets and authors, or, more frequently, incidents which the painter had caught from the life and manners of the people around him; differing somewhat from the drama-pictures of Hogarth, in that it was seldom the object of the artist to point a moral in his work; differing also in this, that beauty and loveliness were sought rather than the deformity occasioned by crime and sensuality; while the first object was to please the eye before the gratification of the mind.

No doubt our school suffered somewhat by this change from heroic and religious to familiar art—suffered in the grandeur of its attempts at least, more especially in the estimation of Continental nations—and really suffered by adopting too generally subjects of a somewhat tame and familiar class, to the exclusion of the ideal and the poetical. It gained, however, in care, in refinement of execution, in attention to the completion of the parts and the perfection of the work as a whole; and of late years there has been a marked tendency in our artists to leave the commonplace and the familiar for subjects

which not only appeal to the eye but interest the mind also. We find that soon after the commencement of the present century, several painters almost simultaneously rose into notice, whose works had at least a common likeness, in that they were of cabinet size and bore somewhat the same relation to historic art that the tale or the novel does to history. It is our intention to take three of these painters who held, and still hold, the highest place in public estimation, and from their practice to illustrate the new direction which art took in their hands.

It is noteworthy that these three artists, whom all will admit to have attained the highest eminence in this class of art, should at the same time represent the three sections of our countrymen; that in Wilkie, Scotland, in Mulready, Ireland, and in Leslie, England, have reason to be proud of men who have left behind them pictures so varied in manner, original in treatment, and so characteristic of British art as to be wholly different from those of any other country. It will enable us to develope the progress of art of this class if, in the first instance, our attention is confined to the works of these three representative men; afterwards noticing those of their companions and fellow labourers in the same walk who were their contemporaries or successors.

David Wilkie, the Scotch representative of the branch of art we are now entering upon, was the oldest of the three painters whom we have included in this chapter. He was born on the 18th of November, 1785, at Cults in the county of Fife, of which place his father, also named David, was at that time the minister. The painter was his third son. The minister, it seems, if

his own assertion may be accepted, married for his first wife a lady of great beauty; for he enters in his diary of October 18, 1776, "Was this day married to one of the most beautiful women of Fife." He lost her in the short space of five months, and shortly after married a far away cousin; perhaps from gratitude, since through her father's influence he had received his call to Cults. She, too, was shortly taken from him, dying in child-bed; and for a third wife the minister took the notable daughter of a neighbouring miller of the village of Pitlassie, of whom the painter was the third child.

It may be presumed that, with an increasing family and the small stipend of a minister of the Scotch Church of that day, the young David would be brought up with the strictest frugality. A few acres of glebe and a stipend of 100*l.* a year must be carefully laid out to secure necessaries, let alone luxuries; and much of the artist's frugality of disposition, much of his acquisitive habits must have been owing to the teachings of his early life—acquisitiveness, be it noted, in the best sense, since it led him to gather at all times, and of every kind, materials for his art, and to acquire art-knowledge as well as riches. As with all other painters, we hear of Wilkie's precociousness; that he drew before he wrote, which most children do, and that ere his seventh year, when he was sent to the village school of Pitlassie, he surprised his parents by chalking a head on the floor, and by drawing on the walls. While at Pitlassie school he improved in the use of his pencil if he gained little else, and when overtaxed by his schoolfellows with demands for sketches and portraits, cannily turned his

skill to small profit by demanding slate-pencils, marbles, pens, &c. in return.

As he advanced in boyhood, we are told by his biographer that he was a great observer of workmen and their habits and actions; even gaining skill in some handicrafts. This talent of observation will be more especially spoken of when we note his pictures; it is one that indicates the true painter more than all the rude attempts with chalk or charcoal, or scribblings on the margins of books, or even the portrait sketches of his schoolfellows; on which much stress is laid, but which is common more or less to all boys. Of his precocity in art, however, Cunningham gives evidence in a book of sketches made between 1797-8, containing illustrations of the seasons, perhaps copies, and other drawings, "the figures slightly coloured, and the fields and woods and waters which belong to them faintly shaded in; they are," he says, "rude and unartistlike, but remarkable for that sense of quantity and distance, which belongs to mathematical minds."

In Fifeshire, beyond a portrait or two by Sir Joshua, there were no pictures to inspire the prospective painter, and although he was occasionally thrown into the company of David Martin, yet that artist died before Wilkie was twelve years old, and his example and conversation could have had but little influence. As the lad grew in years his love of art increased, and the minister soon felt that his son was set upon being a painter. This choice was hardly one that could be pleasing to the Presbyterian clergyman, who would doubtless consider art as one of "the lusts of the eye;" nor was it more agreeable to the lad's maternal grandfather, for the miller

and elder had set his heart upon little David's becoming a minister like his father: still, when the parents of the lad saw that his bent was decidedly to art, they cast about for the best means of cultivating his talents, and after some hesitation upon the part of the secretary, who doubted the lad's fitness, he was admitted into the Trustees' Academy at Edinburgh, and studied there under John Graham, in company with William, afterwards Sir William Allan, John Burnet, and Alexander Fraser. Burnet, speaking of Wilkie at this period, says, "When he came to our class he had much enthusiasm of a queer silent kind, and very little knowledge of drawing: he had made drawings, it is true, from living nature in that wide academy the world, and chiefly from men and boys or such groups as chance threw in his way; but in that sort of drawing in which taste and knowledge are united he was far behind others who, without a tithe of his talent, stood in the same class." Wilkie himself confirmed this, for adverting to his having obtained an entrance to the school with much difficulty and chiefly through the influence of the Earl of Leven, he says, "I for one can allow no ill to be said of patronage; patronage made me what I am, for it is plain that merit had no hand in my admission." When admitted, however, the young artist was a most diligent student, readily apprehending the character and sentiment of what he was at work upon. He speedily sent home to his parents some specimens of his studies from the antique; which, however, were Greek indeed to the village worthies, for when they were shown to one of the kirk elders, taking up a drawing of a foot he inquired of the minister, "And what is this, sir?" "It is a foot,"

replied the minister. "A foot!" exclaimed the elder, "it is mair like a fluke (a flounder) than a foot." The youth, however, was soon to achieve a work more comprehensible by the elders and villagers of his native place.

Young Wilkie left Edinburgh and the Trustees' Academy in 1804 and returned for a while to his native village. Unlike many other artists he seems at once to have found the true bent of his genius and the class of subject best suited to his powers. In the adjoining village of Pitlassie, where the family of his mother resided, there was an annual fair held, and the strange characters, the rustic humours, the many incidents of merchandise and barter common to such gatherings, were taken by the young artist for the subject of his first picture. It is characteristic of his beginnings in art that we find him making a careful study of the locality—walking the ground, as it were, to note anything that would add to the local truth of his work. This practice he continued throughout his career. One of his pupils, on a like occasion, accompanied Wilkie to the Tower, when he was bent upon painting a subject connected with that building. Sketch-book in hand they traversed that part of the time-honoured fortress which was the traditional locality of his incident. Nothing was to be seen but a high bare wall; a closer inspection, however, revealed a long spike projecting from it. "Note it in your book, lad," said the painter; "it might have held a traitor's head, perchance." In after years, when about to paint the picture of "Reading the Gazette," he made a like careful survey of the approach to the Soldier's Hospital. Cunningham relates

his visit to "the old rabblement of houses which in days before the cholera and amended taste" formed the main thoroughfare to what was and is called Chelsea College: ay, and forms it still, with almost the same ill-matched and picturesque range of public-houses with swinging signs, teeming cellars, provision-stalls, and tobacconists' shops that then existed; "cholera and amended taste" having made little inroad on one side of the road, although they have, perhaps, helped to throw down the wall of the soldier's cemetery which skirts the opposite side of the way, and to purge its murky gloom by turfing and planting.

This, however, has led us away from Pitlassie, and the painter's first picture—begun in August, 1804, and finished within the year. Though a work of small size, it contains much subject and many figures, and enables us to see that Wilkie was a diligent as well as a ready workman. As far as execution goes, "Pitlassie Fair" seems painted at once, and in most cases direct from Nature. It has little promise of the colour and tones which he subsequently sought and achieved. A red rank hue pervades the picture; and we see the flat manner and want of textural truth, combined with a certain broadness of touch, that prevailed with the artists of the day. The work, moreover, is allied to the Dutch School in some of its incidents, which are such as in after years he would have rejected from his canvas; as, for instance, the two idiotic children with the toy, in the left-hand corner, &c. Some of the other incidents of his picture he again used in other works, as the man with the jew's-harp, which he worked into a subject. His early skill in handling is seen in the execution of some of the acces-

sories, the crates of pottery, the tables, and other products displayed in the fair. It perhaps arises from the onceness of execution above alluded to, and the simplicity of his materials, that the picture has stood so perfectly, while other of his works have well nigh perished; and whatever faults or shortcomings it may evidence, it certainly is an extraordinary work for a lad of nineteen years of age.

Wilkie remained some time at Cults, engaged in painting the portraits of persons in the neighbourhood, and even made trips to other Scotch towns in search of sitters. During this time also he finished "Pitlassie Fair," and another smaller picture called "The Village Recruit." But his ambition led him beyond the narrow bounds of a Scotch village, or even beyond the Scotch metropolis itself, and he determined to start for London. He had carefully husbanded his gains by portraiture, and having sold his picture of the "Fair" for 25*l.* to Mr. Kinnear, with the sum thus at command he took his passage from Leith on the 20th May, 1805, to try his fortune in the great city. No doubt he had heard many accounts of its size, of the vast number of inhabitants it contained, and of all the dangers that then, far more than at present, beset the youthful and inexperienced traveller; and as he entered London by its great port, surrounded with dirt and coarse brutality, the city could hardly impress him favourably on any ground but that of its picturesqueness; and we can well imagine his sense of loneliness as he hurried westward, and the many tender longings he felt for the kind hearts he had left behind in the manse at Cults.

Wilkie's first endeavour on his arrival in London was

to obtain admission as a student in the Royal Academy. He found the rooms in which the schools are held occupied by the annual exhibition, and it was only on its close, at the end of July, that he was entered as a probationer. Here he became acquainted with Jackson, the portrait painter, who describes him in a letter to Haydon (also a student) as a "tall, pale, thin Scotchman." A lad of delicate health then, he continued all his life to suffer from maladies which baffled the acumen of his physicians, which often interposed to prevent his labours, and which finally carried him off at a time of life when the world might have hoped to see many more fine works by his hand. Wilkie, on his arrival, had taken lodgings in Norton Street, Portland Place, and with the usual providence of his countrymen, he sought to make proper provision for the future. He had brought to London with him the small picture of "The Recruit;" this he found means to display in a window near Charing Cross, where it met with a purchaser at the modest price of six pounds, which our painter was glad to add to his little store. At the close of the exhibition he began to devote a large portion of his time to his studies at the Royal Academy, and in December obtained admission as a student. He gradually advanced from the antique to the life school, and studied from the living model with great interest and satisfaction. During the next four years we find, from frequent entries in his diaries, that he not only continued his studies in the schools, but attended diligently the lectures of the professors; and this while he was at work at pictures which were gradually raising him to great reputation. But at this point we will leave him for

awhile, to bring the other two painters whom we have chosen as representative men to the same point of comparison.

William Mulready, the Irish representative of the class of art of which we are now treating, was born on the 30th of April, 1786, at Ennis, in the county of Clare. It is strange that of one so lately removed from amongst us, with whom we were personally intimate, so little of the details of his life should be known,—the more so that though generally taciturn as to his affairs, Mulready was accustomed on occasions to speak freely of himself and his avocations. His father followed the trade of a leather breeches maker, and was a master workman in his craft. Shortly after the birth of his talented son, he removed to Dublin with his family, where he continued to carry on his trade for awhile; but he passed over to London about the time that the lad was five and a half years old, and took up his abode in Old Compton-street, Soho.

The boy had already shown some aptitude for drawing; having, it is said, at three years old copied a hare with sufficient accuracy to be known without labelling. In 1805 appeared a little book, called "*The Looking Glass;* a mirror in which any little boy or girl may see what he or she is, and those who are not quite good may find out what they ought to be." This book is said to have been written by W. Godwin, under the name of Theopilus Marcliffe, and is the history and early adventures of a young artist. It is known that it was compiled from conversations with Mulready, who was then engaged in illustrating some juvenile books for the author; and the facts in it related to the painter's early life. It is now very scarce. It contains illus-

trations of the talent of the subject of the tale, done at three, five, and six years old, and presumed to be imitations of Mulready's own drawing at the same age. Many children at a like age produce such works, which are made no account of when the after bent of the youth is not to art, but which are looked upon as treasures of precocious genius, when in riper years, study or accident have developed the lad into a painter.

Soon after the arrival of the family in London, young Mulready was put to school; at first, to one kept by a preacher of the Methodist persuasion, where he had for a schoolfellow, Heath, afterwards celebrated as an engraver. But the parents of Mulready were members of the "old faith," as he used to designate it; and at ten years of age the boy was removed to a school in Castle-street, Long Acre, kept by a Roman Catholic, and afterwards placed under the Irish chaplain of the Neapolitan ambassador, who gave instruction at No. 7, Newman-street. Here young Mulready continued nearly two years, learning a little Latin, besides the usual English rudiments. At the end of that time, Mr. Ryan was unfortunately burned to death, and the lad was transferred to another Catholic teacher, who resided in the neighbourhood of Buckingham-gate; then an entrance into the park and Birdcage-walk, shut at all times against any vehicles, except the most exclusively privileged, and even against foot-passengers at a very early hour in the evening. It is not possible to say what amount of knowledge the youth obtained under these various masters. In after life he claimed to be able to read the *Æneid* in its original tongue, and was able to detect a false quantity in one,

who, presuming him to be ignorant, undertook boastfully to interpret to him a quotation from that work. He, at least, knew the Greek *alphabet*, since on a sheet of sketches and small pen-and-ink hints as to the mode of thinking out his pictures, there are many memoranda written in its characters.

No doubt while at school, his pencil was as active as it had been in his younger days. "A First Attempt," the whole length of a gentleman painted with water colours, the costume pointing to about 1795 or 1796, was probably done at this time; and has the appearance of a copy from a print. This being the only relic preserved to us, his progress must be merely a matter of surmise. By some means he was thrown into the way of artists, since Mr. Graham, who was engaged in painting one of the subjects for Macklin's Bible, "David Instructing Solomon," exhibited at the Academy 1797, saw the boy, and, struck with his beauty and fair proportions, made interest with the father to let him sit to him as a model for the young prince. No doubt this admission to the study of an artist, and the sight of some of the arcana of painting, stimulated young Mulready, already prepared to love and take a delight in art; and this makes the wonder less, that we find him while yet of a mere schoolboy age, endeavouring to get into the only really good school where he could at that time study—the school of the Royal Academy. When only just thirteen he applied to Banks, the sculptor, for a letter to the keeper, in order to gain admission as a student. He took with him a copy in chalk from a cast of the Apollo. Banks saw dawnings of ability in the boy, although the work was hardly

sufficient to win him entrance. He recommended him to try again and return in a month—advised him to join a drawing academy in Furnival's Inn Court, and on the failure of that school very shortly afterwards, allowed the young lad to study in his own gallery.

From this time he drew in Banks' studio, and under the sculptor's eye, for nearly twelve months; after the first six his kind instructor thought he might send in a figure to the Council, but his drawing from the Hercules was not approved; at the end of that time, however, Mr. Wilton, the keeper, struck with a drawing the boy had made from a statue by Michael Angelo, admitted him to draw as a probationer with the other pupils; and a few weeks after, when fourteen years and six months old—that is, in October 1800—he obtained his student's ticket. When once a student, his ambition and diligence must have been indeed great, for among the drawings exhibited at South Kensington, in March 1864, was one from the group of the Boxers, signed in a boy's round hand, and dated 1800, with this inscription also, "for permission to draw from the living model in the Royal Academy." About the same time he obtained the greater silver palette of the Society of Arts; and it is said that from the day he completed his fifteenth year he required no more aid from his parents.

What the works were on which he was employed when he thus went forth to fight the battle of life alone, it is not possible now to tell; he used to say that he had tried his hand at everything, from a miniature to a panorama; we know that all his life he was a teacher, and he declared of himself that he had passed through life as a drawing-master, giving a little of his superfluous

time to painting. Perhaps this life-long habit of teaching others may lead to the secret of the careful completion that marked all he did; to that habit of making sure of everything beforehand, of studying out all the parts and details that he might be accurate and assured in all he said, and, moreover, able thoroughly to convince others that he knew to the bottom what he was employed upon. It is far too much the habit of some of our artists who think that all precise knowledge is opposed to genius, to do things empirically, "by feeling," as they desire to express it. Not so Mulready, who first convinced himself on all points—whether it were drawing, perspective, composition, light and shade, or the pigments and vehicles he was to make use of—and then was so entirely master of his whole subject, that, besides being an excellent teacher and adviser of others, his works come nearer to perfection than those of any other painter of our school. Among the drawings exhibited at South Kensington by his executors, previous to their public sale, were some landscape sketches of Kirkstall Abbey, dated in July and August, 1803; and the first picture he exhibited at the Royal Academy, the "Crypt in Kirkstall Abbey," now or lately in the possession of Mr. C. W. Cope, R.A., which was, no doubt, painted at the same time.

How Mulready became first acquainted with John Varley, the water-colour painter, is not told; whether during his country journeys to sketch, or at his home in London where Varley gathered many of the rising artists of the day. From that little school, Mulready, Linnell, W. Hunt and others, no doubt learnt much of the love of art. Mulready there found his wife, who was a sister of Varley's. The young painter seems to have entered

upon his married life with much less thought and prudence than he gave to his art life: before he was eighteen years of age, and when he must really have been *earning* his *daily* bread, he was a husband; before he was nineteen, a father. Four sons were the issue of the marriage, which, to say the least, was not a fortunate one: the pair were early separated and never afterwards resided together.

It has been said that Mulready began, as other young artists have done, and as it is inferred students in the Royal Academy *must* do, by attempting works in the grand style; that among his first productions in this way were "Ulysses and Polyphemus" and the "Disobedient Prophet;" that these were his first offerings to the Academy exhibition, and were both rejected. We have seen above, however, that he exhibited first in 1804 a picture painted when he was little more than seventeen years of age, so that it is little likely he had made any previous efforts; and from that time till 1807 all his exhibited works are landscape studies. Moreover, the two sketches just named were certainly of a very much later date, and there is no evidence that they were ever carried further than sketches. His first attempts in figure painting exhibited, were "Old Kasper," from Southey's "Battle of Blenheim," in 1807, and "The Rattle," in 1808, both at the British Institution; and both subjects treated familiarly and founded on Dutch art. The only evidence that Mulready ever contemplated high art was afforded by his picture of "The Supper at Emmaus," painted in 1809. This had never been exhibited prior to its forming a part of the collection at Kensington in 1864; it was on millboard, of the dark brown school,

and, if ever rejected by the Royal Academy, Mulready himself must have confirmed that decision, as he did not bring it forward in the collection of his works, gathered together in his lifetime and under his own superintendence, at the Society of Arts. Even after his death, and when a great desire prevailed to possess any characteristic work of his hand, it excited no competition.

Thus, at the early age of nineteen, we find Mulready a student of some five years' standing in the Royal Academy, and one who had already "given hostages to fortune" as a husband and a father. We know, from the number of his works of about this period—studies he left behind him, both from the antique and the life—that he was a diligent student then, and that for his life long he continued to work and to take the deepest interest in the schools. His last words in evidence before the Royal Academy Commission, "I have, from the first moment I became a visitor in the life-school, drawn there as if I were drawing for a prize,"—testify to this, if we had not the stronger evidence of the wonderful studies that he wrought on up to almost the last days of his life.

Here, following the arrangement we have adopted, we will turn to the life of Leslie (the third of the trio whom we have classed together), preparatory to entering into some comparison of their labours and the influence they have had on our national art. *Charles Robert Leslie*, the youngest of the three artists whom we have selected as representatives of the domestic and dramatic painting of the present century, was born in London on the 11th October, 1794. In the short autobiography which he has left, the painter does not give the exact place of his birth, but only tells us that

his first recollections were of living in a house in Portman Place, Edgware Road. Though born in our metropolis, Leslie was of American parentage, being the son of Robert Leslie and Lydia Baker, natives of Maryland, both originally of British descent. Robert Leslie, the father of the painter, was a clock and watch maker, who, settling in Philadelphia, took a partner into his business, and then, in 1793, made a voyage to London with all his family, in order to purchase stock-in-trade on advantageous terms in the mother country. His stay in England extended over several years. Some months after his arrival Charles Robert was born, it is said, in Clerkenwell, where the manufacturers of clocks and watches then, as now, mostly resided. A brother was also born in this country. His partner dying, the father was constrained to return to America, taking his family with him.

The journey was in many respects a long and troublesome one. The United States were then at war with France, and the American ship in which the family sailed was attacked by a privateer of superior force, which, though beaten off, inflicted so much damage on their vessel, that it was necessary to put into Lisbon to refit. Battered by fight, and tossed by tempests, the voyagers did not reach Philadelphia until the 11th May, 1800. They had left London on the 13th September, 1799, and had been seven months and twenty-six days on their tedious passage. The watchmaker found his affairs greatly entangled, and was obliged to commence a lawsuit with the executors of his partner. The trouble and anxiety attendant on this suit preyed upon his mind, and before his eldest son was ten years of age, he was left, with the rest of the young

family, to the care of a widowed mother. Leslie ever spoke warmly and tenderly of his father's kindness and affection, and those who had the happiness to know him when himself a parent, can well feel that, if his father resembled him, sad and deep indeed must have been the loss; for one more tender, or more devoted to his children than the painter, it is hardly possible to picture to ourselves.

At the father's death the widow was left in very straitened circumstances, and was obliged to eke out her means by opening a boarding-house, whilst the eldest daughter aided to maintain the household by teaching drawing in the families of the once capital city. The citizens of Philadelphia seem to have shown much consideration for the widow, and kindliness for her fatherless children. The professors of the university abated their charges in favour of the boys; although the painter confesses that the liberality of the professor of mathematics was not met by corresponding exertions on the part of his pupil. He felt but little interest in the study, and little power in its prosecution; the mathematical faculties being, perhaps, those least active of the many qualities that go to make up a perfect painter. Meanwhile the boys, in the summer and autumn, were frequent visitors to the farmhouses in the neighbourhood, where uncles and aunts, both on the father's and mother's side, practised the primitive occupations of farmers and millers, on the pleasant creeks of the Brandywine; where the painter learnt to enjoy the loveliness of natural scenery, and treasured up for his future years happy memories of the country sports, the free kindly manners, and the harvest frolics of the people.

But life wore on, the boy Charles approached his fourteenth year, and it was time to determine his course in life. He himself tells us his early wish was to be a painter; but the widow knew that with her straitened means she could not afford him proper instruction. She herself thought of the more business-like profession of an engraver; but herein, too, the education was difficult, and the success uncertain; and finally the boy was bound apprentice to the firm of Bradford and Inskeep, booksellers and publishers of the city of his abode. Mr. S. Bradford, the senior partner, was a true man of business, and wished his young assistant to devote his whole heart to his duties. The boy loved painting, and ever lingered at the print-shop windows, or made a hasty visit, when on errands of business, to the open studio of Mr. Sully, the principal painter of the city, whereby not only his love of art increased, but also his sense of what was good and beautiful in its practice. The old bookseller at first repressed his attempts. "If he found me drawing," says Leslie, "he shook his head, and seemed so much displeased, that the most distant hope of his ever assisting me to become a painter, never entered into my mind." But man proposes, and God disposes. What the apprentice wished, and the master objected to, was at length to be brought about by his very means, and he eventually aided, with great liberality, in our painter's art education.

This event happened on the occasion of the visit of George Frederick Cooke, the English tragedian, on a starring engagement to Philadelphia. The young painter —a great lover of the stage—was present at the first representation of *Richard*, and was deeply impressed with

the actor's powers. He managed to make from recollection a telling sketch of the tragedian, which astonished the sedate bookseller, who henceforth encouraged him to practise his art. A friend carried this sketch to the Exchange Coffee House, at the hour when it was most thronged with men of business. The work was considered wonderful for so young a lad, and the good bookseller, contributing liberally himself, found no difficulty in raising a fund sufficient to enable the young artist to visit Europe for two years' study.

Before leaving America, Leslie received some instructions in the use of his materials from Mr. Sully, to whom he had been introduced. Copying part of a picture in Leslie's presence, the painter put his palette into his pupil's hands, and required him to proceed as far on another canvas. This he continued from day to day until both copies were finished, and the pupil had learnt at least the accidence of his art, and understood what was meant by scumbling, glazing, and other executive processes. Leslie's execution continued throughout life to be of the simplest character; his vehicle, latterly at least, was merely linseed oil, and he rejected systematically those executive processes which serve to enrich and give brilliancy to the pigments, and to produce variety in the handling of a picture: but this we shall have to speak of more fully in treating of his art.

Leslie sailed from New York on the 11th of November, 1811, provided with letters of introduction to West, Beechey, and other artists. He travelled in company with one of his late masters, Mr. Inskeep, and entered London early in December—a gloomy month to find himself alone, parted from all the companions of his

early days—at the early age of sixteen. It argues well of his training that a lad at such a time of life could be trusted to the temptations of London; trusted to his own good sense to devote his hours to study, and to a prudent use of the means placed at his disposal. He delivered his letters of introduction, and was kindly received. He took lodgings in Warren Street with a Mr. Moore, who had also come from America to study, a youth but two years older than himself, and the two began to devote their days to painting, their evenings to the Royal Academy.

Here, then, was the young painter established in London. His probation in the Royal Academy was terminated by his admission as a student in 1813. West and Allston opened their studios to one they looked upon as their countryman. They permitted him to see their works in progress, aided him with counsel and advice, and introduced him to society. In West's gallery he made several copies, but whether of the president's own works he does not give us to understand. The British Museum contained the Townley collection of marbles, and these Leslie studied, besides rising at six in the morning to join his friend Moore in working from the Elgin collection, at that time at Burlington House.

Leslie placed little value on instruction, and thought that, given the materials for study, every man will best instruct himself. He found that Fuseli paid little attention to the students, and he approved of this course; telling us "that under Fuseli's *wise neglect*, Wilkie, Mulready, Etty, Landseer, and Haydon distinguished themselves, and were the better for not being made all alike

by teaching." In after years he carried out these views with respect to his own children; he gave them no instruction himself, nor did he ever seem to wish them to enter as students of the Royal Academy: where at least they would have found the best materials and means. They had the run of their father's painting room, and were left to their own devices until feeling should develop them into artists. He says, "Art may be *learnt*, but cannot be *taught*," a maxim that sounds well, but puts a part for the whole; for though invention and feeling cannot be taught, the language in which they are to be expressed may: young painters have many difficulties as to drawing and the executive processes of painting, which may be cleared away by judicious advice and teaching without in the least interfering with that originality or invention which is the true gift of Nature to the born artist.

While following out his studies in his own manner, Leslie did not forget that he must find means to live, and he seems early to have gained employment in portraiture of the small size, which he continued to adopt through life. Allston introduced him into society, and he soon threw off the gloom that had gathered around him at the first feeling of the loneliness of his situation; while his cheerful nature, always highly appreciative of wit and humour, seems to have made all who came near him fast and constant friends.

Here, then, we find the three painters whom we have chosen as representative men in this class of art, past the first period of study, and coming before the public with their works; let us, before proceeding with their career as individuals, endeavour to compare them with

each other, to arrive at their several characteristics, and the points in which they advanced British art.

One thing they had in common: they had all three received some part of their education in the Royal Academy, had been for some time subject to its teaching, and to the influence of its members and professors; and while in each there is some trace of that period of student life in which the aspiration is to high art, classic or religious, they all speedily adopted that essentially characteristic class of subjects for which afterwards each became celebrated. Wilkie's classic and historic period was passed indeed before he entered the Royal Academy; having culminated while he studied in the Trustees' Academy, when he painted his "Ceres in Search of Proserpine," and "Diana and Calisto with Nymphs." It is true he had somewhat of a revival of the feeling when he undertook to paint for Mr. Davison the "Alfred in the Neatherd's Cottage," and from time to time we find it recurring in after-life. As to Mulready, we have already stated that this period only produced one very indifferent attempt, "Our Lord at Emmaus."

Leslie's classic period endured longer than with either of the others; but it arose more probably from the example of his friends and compatriots, West and Allston, than from any direction given to his studies by the Royal Academy. Thus in a letter to his sister, written in August 1812, before his admission to the schools even as a probationer, we find him saying:—"I am now reading Telemachus again, and intend to paint some subjects from it." He speaks of painting from "Gothic poems, such as Scott's, because I have an opportunity of making parts of my figures naked, and I am now

studying the human form as much as possible. It was for this reason I chose Timon of Athens and Hercules." Shortly afterwards, in 1813, he exhibited "The Murder Scene from Macbeth;" and in the Exhibition of 1814, "Saul and the Witch of Endor," which may also have been painted before his admission as student. Thus we have seen that his bent to high art was manifested before he entered the Academy, and it is evident that he had a strong natural feeling in that direction, for in after-life he continually recurred to such subjects; painting "Martha and Mary" in 1833, and repeating it in 1847; also "The Pharisee and Publican" in the same year, and "Christ and his Disciples at Capernaum" in 1843, and again in 1858.

We should therefore arrive at a safe conclusion in saying that the education these three artists received, while it armed them with technical knowledge and executive power, did not in any way interfere with their originality. If we compare the methods of the three in the conduct of their pictures we shall find their practice very diverse. Wilkie began by a rough blot of the treatment, afterwards preparing a somewhat finished sketch in oil. He at times made a few studies of the action of the hands, but his real work was direct from the life on the canvas; and, although he altered and changed the action of the hands, the inclination of the head, or the attitude of a figure, or even substituted a more for a less characteristic model, yet he retained the general grouping and arrangement, the general effect and composition of his sketch. The blots of colour in his sketches were at times somewhat arbitrary, and it was difficult to assign them to any definite object or form;

but having pleased him in the sketch, he was very solicitous to keep them in the same place and of the same quality in his picture, and often took much pains to invent suitable details for the purpose. The young artist, to whom such hints are most valuable, may study the ingenious way in which the small blots of red have been carried round the somewhat grey and slaty picture of "The Blind Fiddler." As to the alterations Wilkie made in the progress of his pictures, we find frequent allusions in his diaries such as, "Rubbed out to-day what I did yesterday." "Made several alterations in my picture," &c.

As he advanced in art and obtained more power, he seems to have made his previous sketches slighter, and to have painted more at once on the panel or canvas. In "The Sacrament of John Knox," left unfinished at his death, and of which a previous sketch exists, heads and hands, painted at once to a very low key consistent with the chiaroscuro of the finished work, are surrounded by the colour of the raw canvas, and no doubt would have fallen properly into their places as the work proceeded; as it is, they show the certainty with which he latterly carried on his pictures.

Mulready appears to have commenced his works after much more preparation even than Wilkie. Before beginning a picture, we find "first thoughts" for it in pencil, blots in pen and ink, larger sketches in chalk, and then frequently a small completed sketch in oil. All these progressive studies for the picture of "Punch" were to be seen when his works were collected at South Kensington—the first chalk sketch, then a larger chalk sketch, and a small sketch in oil, were amongst the

gifts by Mr. Sheepshanks to the nation. After this stage Mulready often made slight sketches of individual figures; studies for varied actions of the hands or the head, changed attitudes, variations in character or expression, as, notably in the head, the hand with the comb, &c., for the principal figure in "The Barber's Shop:" studies which are also at South Kensington. At times, when he had found a characteristic model, Mulready still further enlarged and thought out a study from it in pen and ink, or in chalk; and after all, more especially for his later works, put the whole together in a most elaborate and highly finished cartoon—finished with such care and anxiety that these works are almost equal in beauty to his pictures. He seemed to have a great dislike to losing his *ground*, and always to have drawn his picture most carefully on the panel or canvas before commencing with colour. If, which was rarely the case, he did alter after the work was commenced, the part changed was carefully removed to the ground.

The habit of preparing careful cartoons, and of drawing the work elaborately on the canvas, grew on him latterly; his cartoons became more elaborate, as was shown in the unfinished one of "The Bathers with Lizards." The large "Toy Seller," left unfinished at his death, had been commenced by a beautiful drawing on the canvas before colour was added to it; notwithstanding the elaborate studies in pen and ink for the sunflowers and trees which had preceded its commencement, as well as the beautiful little completed picture in the Sheepshanks' collection made many years previously. Other completed pictures, as "Pinching the Ear," in the same collection, Mulready seems to have looked upon only as

preparatory studies to larger works, since he afterwards finished a picture of the same composition, but much larger size, for Mr. Vernon.

Leslie in his mode of commencing his pictures differed widely from both Mulready and Wilkie. His practice was the very opposite of Mulready's; Wilkie's being as it were between the two. We may presume that Leslie made some sketch of the arrangement of his picture previous to beginning to paint, although there is little or no material of this kind by his hand. Certainly he did not like to exhaust himself by making previous studies either for the whole picture or separate parts. He mostly painted direct from the model on to his canvas, seizing any happy attitude or expression that arose naturally; consequently he often made changes in the progress of his work, and removed and destroyed very beautiful passages in his pictures, to adopt some better or more graceful action that arose as he proceeded, and pleased him by its novelty. He is said not to have given much trouble to his sitters, often hardly requiring them to pose for him, but merely referring to Nature at various points of his work, or when difficulties occurred. From these two causes his pictures generally seem produced without labour; they delight us by their freshness and ease, and are the very opposite to the elaborate and somewhat over-studied excellence of Mulready.

In one respect Leslie differed wholly from Wilkie and Mulready in the choice of his subjects. The two latter, as soon as they had emerged from historic art, began by inventing the incidents which they painted. Such were "The Village Politicians," "The Card Players," "The Barber's Shop," and "The Fight Interrupted," subjects

in which truth of character, humour, and close observation of nature were the great requisites. Leslie, on the contrary, passed from the "grand historic period" of the student, to the illustration of incident in the works of the poets and classic writers, and continued through life to choose such subjects for his pencil. They presented to him an added difficulty which did not lie in the way of those chosen by his two contemporaries; since all who have read Goldsmith or Sterne, Cervantes or Shakspeare, (but especially the latter two), have formed to themselves special ideas of the principal characters in these works, and are apt to object at once to a new or tangible representation of them, either by the actor or the painter. The painter's presentation of Quixote or Sancho, of Falstaff or Bardolph, of Perdita, Katharine, or Anne Page, not being that which they, in reading the author, had pictured to themselves. In this very difficult position, Leslie was pre-eminently successful in realizing characters in harmony with the general idea; and his Uncle Toby, Sancho, Katharine and Perdita are accepted by most people as the very individuals Sterne, Cervantes, and Shakspeare created. The painter entering into the true spirit of the poet or writer, has placed before their eyes a bodily presentment of the being with which the author had filled their imagination.

As a painter, Mulready almost wholly avoided this difficulty, his principal pictures being subjects and incidents of his own invention. It is true that after the publication of Van Voorst's edition of the *Vicar of Wakefield*, which Mulready illustrated, he was induced to carry out some of the designs into pictures, and also true that one or two of these rank as his best works; but it is more for

their beautiful art, their colour and completion, than from his having mastered the characters of whom Goldsmith wrote. No one can accept the figure making hay, in the "Haymakers"—almost a portrait of the painter himself—as the Burchell of Goldsmith; or the young lady with the rake in the same picture as the simple-minded Sophia. Nor with all their beauty do the pair in "The Wedding Gown" bring home to us the quaint simplicity of Dr. Primrose and his wife, whom he chose "as she did her wedding-gown, not for a fine glossy surface, but such qualities as would wear well"—the "good-natured notable woman, who could read any English book without much spelling, and whom none could excel in pickling, preserving, and cookery." In the picture, the Doctor looks like a modern high-church parson, and his wife like a lady of fashion, rather than the comely maiden the vicar describes as his early choice.

In the Whistonian controversy, in which he has succeeded better in seizing character, the best figure is that of Mr. Wilmot, a true picture of a stubborn, obese pluralist, and quite acceptable as a realization of Goldsmith's ideal; but principally because few have pictured this subordinate character in their own minds. These three pictures, with one from Walter Scott, and "The Seven Ages," are the only subjects not the inventions of the painter; and certainly the characters displayed are not equal to those by Leslie, in the few instances in which he was inventor as well as painter—such as "Who can this be?" or "Who is this from?" and others of the like class, wherein the painter has thoroughly realized an individual exponent of the idea suggested. Like Mulready, Wilkie took few of his subjects from

writers or poets; although he did paint a few historical incidents. Were we to judge him by his "Alfred in the Neat-herd's Cottage," we should not rank his realization of historical characters very high. "John Knox" was better, but it is known that it was founded on that true orator and divine, Edward Irving. And his "Columbus," although really a noble picture, and a fine rendering of the intense self-occupation of the world discoverer in the demonstration of his thesis, has yet but little of the Genoese, and less of the seaman in its presentation.

The subjects chosen by Leslie in the beginning of his career, after he had left the "grand historic" with which each young student considers it his duty to commence, were of a much higher class than the early works of either Wilkie or Mulready. He seems from the first to have had an innate refinement in his choice, and to have thrown a sense of gentle blood into all he did. His works abound in beauty, elegance, character, and quiet humour, making them irresistibly pleasing. Take as an instance the picture of "Sancho Panza in the Apartments of the Duchess" (National Gallery, No. 402), a repetition of an earlier picture at Petworth. How lovely is the duchess, how perfectly at her ease, how truly one of Nature's gentlewomen as she sits listening to Sancho's tale. What a round full form! The light of a happy smile in her eyes; the amused satire of her dimpling mouth, pleased at the simplicity of the peasant squire who takes her into his confidence, and binds her to secrecy as to his master's escapades, putting his finger to his nose as he tells his tale. Contrasted with the rare beauty of the lady, and serving as its foil, is the

stately, frigid duenna, drawn up to her full height, her hands crossed in front, her keen, observant eye seeing all that is going on; but no smile is ever likely to twinkle there nor to part her thin dry lips. What a contrast to the laughing black damsel on the opposite side of the picture, who grins and shows a mouthful of teeth, at the unconscious assurance of the garlic-loving Sancho in relating his adventures to her noble mistress. Then—if anything is wanting to prove the purity of the painter's conceptions—let us turn to the lovely lady in waiting, who leans over the squire, and shows a rounded shoulder of rare beauty, and such a bosom as none but Leslie could paint; and only he could paint so as not to awake an improper thought. And Sancho himself—what an honest, guileless soul he looks! quite alive to creature comforts—the very antithesis of his lenten master—yet happy and content with all that befalls him; quite prepared to believe that master the hero he purports to be, and no ways abashed at grand society.

Look again at the same Sancho (No. 132 Sheepshanks' Collection) when, irritated at the persevering interdict of the physician, he sees dish after dish of the most savoury morsels removed from before him, all but untouched. Here he is the man of authority, suffering under the excess of care for his well-being; the dignity of a governor is upon his shoulders, he is royally apparelled, but the bald shining head, the unformed hands, the red, coarse complexion, and far more, the petty fretfulness he displays, bespeak him the peasant still. Even when Leslie deals with rogues and the simpletons they prey on, it is not the common rogue he represents; and Autolycus, with his ballad "on the hard heart of maids,"

sung by the great fish "that appeared on Wednesday the fourscore of April," is still as Shakspearian a vagabond, as the straw-hatted shepherd, brown with toil, is far removed from the clodhopper of to-day, who has lost all development of calf from stiff-soled boots, and looks to end his days in that parish paradise, the union. Even Leslie's servants are raised above the common household drudges who are expected to be perfection on 10*l.* per annum: Leslie raises them up to dramatic equality with the other characters of his tale; and whether it be "Toinette," the cleverest of abigails, circumventing M. Purgon (Sheepshanks, No. 118), or "Nicole" pinking M. Jourdain (Sheepshanks, No. 116), they seem the very individuals the author dreamt of, and the spectator anticipated. In this latter picture, M. Jourdain himself is the model of pompous ignorance and weakness; his two legs planted in the due attitude of fence, but so thoroughly weak in the knees, so thoroughly wrong from their very rightness; the hand with the foil so attemptedly correct, but so hopelessly out of place; the left hand raised as that defence which is hopeless from the foil, all fill us with a full perception, a thorough representation of the plebeian citizen trying to remedy the defects of his early education, and are so full of character that it may be doubted if the dramatist could have been better illustrated by one of the cleverest of his own countrymen.

Mulready, as we have already said, mostly invented his own subjects, and sometimes without any great subject-matter in them. It has been objected that his irascible disposition and love of fighting is shown in too many of his pictures, and that most of them have some

tendency to brutality and cruelty: but this is surely very unfair towards him. Five or six of his pictures out of the eighty or hundred that he painted may be amenable to this criticism. Thus his "Idle Boys," painted in 1815, wherein an evidently vindictive schoolmaster is using the ruler unmercifully on the palm of one of the lads detected at playing "fox and geese" instead of doing his sum. Then, again, in "The Fight Interrupted" and "The Wolf and the Lamb," we have a well-told tale of a coward and a bully; and in these, as well as "The Careless Messenger" and "The Dog of Two Minds," the fighting element prevails. Moreover, there are episodes of the same nature in "The Convalescent," in "The Seven Ages," and even in "The Last in," where we are well assured that the ironical politeness of the master will end in a good caning to the truant scholar: but this is all. Besides these we have numerous pictures turning on some simple domestic incident, oftentimes well told: as in "The Travelling Druggist," "The Gamekeeper's Cottage," "Crossing the Ford," and "The Sailing Match;" sometimes commonplace, as "The Origin of a Painter" and "Firing a Cannon;" sometimes obscure, as in "The Village Gossips" and "Train up a Child;" and sometimes, as in "The Butt," and still more notably in "The Widow," vulgar and even indelicate.

Mulready's first subjects were evidently chosen in emulation of Wilkie, who preceded him by a year or two in public favour; and in his "Carpenter's Shop," painted in 1808, and "Barber's Shop," in 1811, he had an eye to the popularity of his Scotch rival. This feeling even lingered in his "Punch" and his "Fight Interrupted;"

after which pictures he began gradually to develope a style of his own, and to adopt a changed manner of execution, while the character of his subjects also changed slowly, and tended to a higher class; some degree of sentiment being added to his domestic drama, as in "The Gamekeeper's Wife," and still more fully in "First Love," one of the best of all his invented subjects.

Wilkie had little sense of beauty. The lady in "The first Ear-ring," "The Spanish Mother," or the two females in the group in the left corner of "John Knox," represent as much perhaps as he was capable of, and this much is small indeed. The proportion of his typal female face is long, particularly in the nose, the eyes are too small and too close together, the lower part of the face round rather than oval; neither, as a rule, is there much elegance in his female figures: the rollicking action of the Spanish mother is about one of the best things he painted. To the homeliness of the female in the "Refusal," he might, if beauty was denied to his pencil, have added a little more comeliness; as it is, we feel that Duncan Gray has on the whole the best of it, and that the lady has no loveliness, and little loveableness that he need regret. Nor had Mulready any very great feeling for female beauty; although, from his great power of drawing, he was able to represent, much more perfectly than Wilkie, what beauty he found in Nature. The young girl in "First Love" is one of the fairest of his creations. The female head in his "Mother and Child," and young Mrs. Primrose in "The Wedding Gown," are the only other heads that, in his pictures at least, approach the beautiful. In his female life studies we find much more that is lovely; but, as we have already

said, this arises rather from his accurate imitation than from innate feeling: moreover, it is remarkable how little there is of voluptuous feeling in any of the numerous figures he produced; in which respect they are quite a contrast to the life studies of Etty.

If we compare the power of perceiving and delineating character and humour in the three painters, they each possessed it in a remarkable, although in a very different degree. In Wilkie and Mulready, character and expression formed the basis of their first works, and they both rather abandoned it in after life for other qualities of art; while Leslie, in his later pictures, studied character and individuality perhaps more than even in his early works.

Leslie never had a strong innate feeling for colour. He says of himself, "It was Allston who first awakened what little sensibility I may possess to the beauties of colour. For a long time I took the merit of the Venetians on trust, and, if left to myself, should have preferred works which I now feel to be comparatively worthless. I remember when the picture of 'The Ages,' by Titian, was first pointed out to me by Allston as an exquisite work, I thought he was laughing at me." Yet Leslie's taste and feeling generally led him right in the end, and few of his pictures are really ill-coloured. In the general opinion of his contemporaries his colouring was best while he was under the influence of his friend Newton, with whom he was very intimate. Newton had a fine eye for colour, but he was fettered by his feeble power of execution; whence he was ever feeling out his pictures rather than painting them, and was prevented achieving those precious qualities which arise

from a proper preparation of the ground, and after paintings with transparent colour, glazing, &c., as seen in the noble works of the Venetian school.

When Newton ceased to paint, about 1834, Leslie fell under the influence of Constable, and a marked change took place in his pictures. In a letter to Constable from Petworth, in the latter part of this year, he says:—"I am not aware that I have painted a picture since I have known you, that has not been, in some degree, the better for your remarks; and I constantly feel that if I could please you with what I do, I should be sure to please myself." What the nature of this change was is very apparent in comparing the two pictures of "The Dinner at Page's House." The first one, which is the fullest composition, and the largest of the two works, was painted in 1831; its repetition, now in the Sheepshanks Collection, in 1838. The first is certainly far the richest picture of the two, and contains many passages of colour, possessing great harmony and beauty. Years ago, when the change took place, we, as others, sorrowed over it, and even thought it a great falling off; but on comparing the two pictures in 1862, we found much to appreciate in the new manner. Apart from the mere fact that the last picture is painted on a much more lasting principle of execution, there is a freshness, a daylight about the work, an absolute forgetfulness of paint, and a sense of cool surrounding air, that compensates largely for the rich passages we have alluded to. No doubt some changes have taken place in the greys of Leslie's pictures, as there certainly has in those of Constable, but the change has been for the better in the repetition picture, and all for the worse in the larger and earlier work.

Wilkie's natural feeling for colour was far more acute than Leslie's, if less so than Mulready's. As soon as his residence in London gave him an opportunity to consult the works of the old painters, he began by founding himself on Teniers,—Teniers in his somewhat grey and slaty manner. "I have seen," says he, about this time, "some pictures by Teniers, which for clear touching, go to the height of human perfection in art." Strong language, but at least showing his appreciation of that master. "The Blind Fiddler" is an example of this period, wherein not only the colour and execution, but all the other painter-like expedients of the Dutch artist, as to light and shade, focus of colour, and mode of carrying his colour about the picture, have been well studied; although it is somewhat brighter in key, and gayer in colour than the best works of Teniers. In "The Village Festival," we find this system modified, the execution less flat and more broken up, and the whole picture with more tone. Cunningham says Wilkie gathered his leaden hues from setting his pallet by Ibbetson's work on oil painting, but rather perhaps from his study of Teniers; and Wilkie probably afterwards inclined to the brown key from the continued admonition of Sir George Beaumont, who certainly was a kind and warm friend to the young artist, helping him at times of much difficulty, and giving him advice which he often remarks upon as valuable and judicious.

Wilkie gradually approximated to painting as much as possible at once, and finishing the part he was at work upon while wet, without any interval for drying. During his travels in Italy he continually spoke of the *starved* lights and opaque shadows of the English school,

and said that our works were chalky and white; and that water-colour drawings had tainted our exhibitions. Writing to Collins from Florence, he says, "perhaps I say more for colour than I ought," and again from Spain, "with me no starved surface now; no dread of *oil*, no perplexity for fear of change. Your manner of painting a sky is the manner in which I try to paint a whole picture," that is to say, at once and while the whole is wet. We have even heard from Mr. Stonhouse, who joined him while in Spain as a pupil, that on his return so anxious was Wilkie to carry out this practice, that he would make a wall of wax round a head unfinished during the day's work, and laying the panel flat, cover the uncompleted part with oil, to enable him to continue his work in the same state on the morrow. This manner is illustrated in his Spanish pictures, and in "The First Ear-ring" (National Gallery, No. 328), where the whole of the work appears as if it had been fluent at the same time, and the several forms, draperies, and shadows, to have flown into one another as they were painted.

"The Parish Beadle," if rather black in the darks and shadows, is one of the best coloured pictures of Wilkie's early class of subjects, and a good specimen of his ability as a colourist. It is mainly painted direct from the ground into a brown uniting colour. The shadows in most parts of the picture seem laid in with some brown pigment made fluent with abundant medium. Into this brown the white lights appear painted, and over them, while still wet, the local colour rapidly manipulated with a soft brush, a little white being added for half tints or high lights. No

doubt the painter has seized the happy moment when, at the latter part of the day, the work has in some degree set, before applying the local colour as a secondary painting; but, under the best circumstances, such execution would require great skill and rapidity of touch to prevent muddiness from the mixing of the upper and under painting, and the medium or vehicle would require to be abundant and flowing: an examination of the lavender-coloured apron of the female with the hurdy-gurdy, and of the same deeper coloured drapery on the dog, will show that they have been accomplished by some such sleight of hand. The rich focussing crimson reds, as in the cape and lining of the beadle's coat, are transparent over a white ground, and give great clearness to the work. Notwithstanding Wilkie's constant apostrophes to colour, and his assertion that "no master has as yet maintained his ground without it," we cannot but think that his tendency as he advanced in art, was to tone rather than to colour.

We have seen him, even before his Italian and Spanish journey, tending to the over use of a brown key in his pictures; and after his return our own experience is that this practice greatly increased upon him. He used asphaltum as his universal shadow, and even mixed it with all his lights to take off that chalky crudity which he found in our English works. Thus he killed the brilliancy of his local colour, although at the same time, by this simple expedient, he increased the tone of his works. As colourists, however, neither Leslie nor Wilkie had the same innate perception as Mulready.

There is yet one point on which these painters may

be compared before we proceed to the history of their individual art progress, that is, their acquaintance with the art of other countries. Wilkie, as we have seen, made diligent study of such foreign art as was accessible to him in his own country, and as soon as opportunity offered, visited the schools and collections abroad. Partly from ill-health, and partly with a view to improvement, he spent some years of his art-life in Italy and Spain; and we have the evidence of his works, as well as of his letters and diary, that Italian and Spanish art, but more especially the latter, greatly influenced his work, and indeed, ended in his thorough change of style: although it must be allowed that the change was not wholly beneficial, and that his fame will rest on his English, rather than upon his Spanish pictures. An admirer of the great Venetian colourists, he never attained to those executive processes to which their works owe so much of their lustre and richness, but continued to paint to the last as at first; varied in his method, however, after his Spanish journey.

Leslie, although full of admiration for the best works of the old masters, never visited the great seats of their art: his knowledge of the Continent was limited to France and Belgium; the monumental art of Italy or Germany he never saw; nor was his practice much influenced by the fine works of the old masters that did come within his observation at home. Mulready never visited the Continent at all, or at most only the French coast, and was wholly unacquainted, except from prints and copies, with the mural works of the great painters. Encumbered with difficulties at the time of life when most young artists travel for improvement, he arrived at

eminence without having seen the great Continental schools, and seemed latterly rather to pride himself upon never having left his own country, and being unindebted to foreign travel. From his birth a member of the Romish communion, had he in his youth seen the simple art of the fifteenth century, it might have influenced his practice; but art would have been a loser thereby. Possessed of little imagination, and not very refined in choice of subject, he was content to labour on the repetition of his own thoughts. Had his art been turned to religious subjects, he might have laboured on the thoughts of others, and realized the letter without the spirit of religious art; so that we should have lost what little originality he possessed. Although he never visited Italy, he understood well the principles of the great colourists; and it were to be wished that, for their rich and varied execution, his own works should influence the British school, and lead to a better understanding of the preparatory processes which give lustre and variety to painting.

CHAPTER VII.

DAVID WILKIE, R.A.

Commences his Career in Art—"The Village Politicians"—"King Alfred"—"The Rent-day"—Early Elected an Associate of the Royal Academy—His Mediums used in Painting—He attempts an Exhibition of his own Works—Its Failure—Home Associations—Bachelor Life—"Blind Man's Buff"—The Academy Hanging Committees—His "Duncan Gray"—Its Repair and History—He visits France—The "Distraining for Rent"—Condition of this Picture—"Penny Wedding"—"Reading the Will"—And "Reading the Gazette of the Battle of Waterloo"—Its Conception and Popularity—Companion Picture by Burnet—The "Parish Beadle"—Commences "George IV.'s Entry into Holyrood"—Domestic Troubles—Illness—Travels in Italy, Germany, and Spain—Influence of the Spanish School—Changes his Style of Art—And Manner of Painting—His Spanish Pictures described—And his new Art criticized—Defects of his Drawing—He is passed over in the Election of President of the Academy—Paints Works of a larger Scale—Opinion upon them—His Voyage to the East—And its Impressions—His Death there—Personal Character; and Recollections of him.

We have been led into a somewhat long digression in the preceding chapter, in order to bring into direct comparison, the art of our three great *genre* painters, both in regard to their choice of subject, their mode of putting it on the canvas, their distinct methods of execution, feeling of colour, and sense of beauty. We left Wilkie simply a student of the Royal Academy. He had, it is true, chosen a walk in art of his own, and painted a picture, "Pitlassie Fair," which would have been no disgrace to many far more advanced in years and art than himself. But as yet he was without patronage, and

dependent on himself for his future. Like many other young artists, Wilkie resorted to portraiture for his subsistence, and to gain the means to enable him to work for fame; to pay for models and canvas and colours for pictures, whose sale might after all be uncertain. But with the peculiar forethought of his countrymen, he borrowed for a time his first work, which, as we have already said, he had sold before leaving his native place; and had "Pitlassie Fair" sent up to London to show as a specimen of his powers, to those who sought the aid of his pencil. He was fortunate in making the acquaintance of Stodart the pianoforte maker, who recommended him sitters; and fortunate also in the choice of the next subject for his pencil. Lord Mansfield, who had seen his "Fair," encouraged him to proceed with a picture of "The Village Politicians," giving him, however, no distinct commission when Wilkie named the modest sum of fifteen guineas as the price of the work. When exhibited in the Royal Academy it attracted much notice, and Wilkie was advised to ask for it a larger, but still very inadequate sum; to which the earl demurred, and claimed the picture at the first-named price; but as no acceptance on his part had been given, Wilkie maintained his ground, and the earl finally sent him a cheque for the full sum, thirty-five guineas. In the May of this year, the painter not yet of the mature age of twenty-one, but full of exultation at his success, writes to his father, "My ambition is got beyond all bounds, and I have the vanity to hope that Scotland will one day be proud of David Wilkie." Oh for one glimpse of the exultant hopes and buoyant-heartedness of our young days! Wilkie's ambition was fully realized

in the end, and Scotland has a right to be proud of her son; but many were the sad hours, many were the disappointments that were to beset his course, which was fated to end when his hopes of gaining yet further honour for his native land were still high.

Wilkie was not a man to be made idle by success. His picture of the "Village Politicians" had been accepted and hung in the Royal Academy, it had attracted great attention, and its sale had at least placed him beyond immediate anxiety. But while the work on the walls at Somerset House was receiving deserved approval, the young painter was labouring diligently upon another of the same class, yet of even more interest. "The Blind Fiddler" was finished by the middle of August, 1806, while the painter was yet in his twenty-first year, and it deserves careful examination as an evidence of the amount of real knowledge, in many qualities of art, he had thus early achieved. We have already had occasion to refer to it in this respect, and its accessibility in our national collection makes it less needful to describe it more fully.

The painter's next work was not a fortunate one. The age of illustration had hardly passed away; the influence of Boydell's Shakspeare Gallery and Macklin's Bible still continued, when Mr. Alexander Davison, of St. James's Square, commissioned pictures from various artists to form a gallery of English history, and applied to Wilkie to paint one of the series. It was hardly to be expected that the young painter, at a time when commissions were not too frequent, would decline such an offer; the more especially as he was allowed to choose his own subject for illustration. He selected the

well-known incident related of King Alfred, who, while in disguise in the cottage of a herdsman, leaves the cakes the housewife had committed to his care to burn, more intent upon trimming his bow than thoughtful of his homely charge. As far as we can learn from his diaries, the picture appears to have given him much trouble, and, in the end, after many changes, was certainly not a success. The Alfred wants dignity and character, the housewife is too much of a scolding shrew, and the herd, who enters during the altercation, and fears the effect of his wife's tongue, yet dares not disclose the rank of his visitor, has a loutish and stupid air, quite inconsistent with a rude age and the quick perception of half-savage life. The picture did not increase Wilkie's reputation at the time: it was pronounced out of his line, and perhaps, also, beyond his powers, and, when finished, it was not exhibited.

In the spring of 1807, Wilkie revisited his native village, there to enjoy the gratifying approval of his parents and the reputation that had already preceded him. Shortly after his arrival, however, he was seized with an attack of fever, from which he but slowly recovered, and although carefully nursed by his affectionate mother and sisters, it was not until October that he was able to return to London and to the work of his easel. This susceptibility to disease and the slowness with which his constitution acted to throw it off, is a marked feature of his life, and shows some innate weakness which neither change of air, diet, nor scene could readily overcome. On his return, he proceeded with a picture of "The Rent Day," commissioned by the Earl of Mulgrave. It is a characteristic incident of English

life characteristically rendered; the story is well told, the grouping and arrangement excellent, and the execution an advance on his former works. It was not sent to the Royal Academy in the following spring, but, nevertheless, was much seen, and added to the artist's reputation among his brethren and patrons. It would be tedious, nor is it within the scope of our work, to follow the painter step by step in his progress; those who wish to do so in detail may consult his life by Allan Cunningham, enriched by extracts from the artist's diaries, to which we are indebted for many facts; it is sufficient for us to take the marked incidents of his art course—those which influenced his practice, or which show great advance or change of style.

His biographer takes opportunity on various occasions to insinuate an opposition on the part of the Academy to the young and rising painter; he tells a long story, to which we have already alluded (p. 103), of the attempt made by Turner to injure the effect of Wilkie's picture of the "Blind Fiddler" on the walls of the exhibition; but it seems a good answer to all such insinuations that as early as the laws of the body would permit, even when he had not attained by a few days the prescribed age, Wilkie was elected an associate member of the body: this was on the 10th November, 1809, when he yet wanted eight days of completing his twenty-fourth year.

On the 29th September, 1809, Wilkie tells us in his diary that he began the "Village Festival," which was at first called "The Alehouse Door." He says, "after employing some time in preparing colours, I chalked it out on the canvas, to assist me in which I dotted out the picture and the sketch into several

compartments. I began with rubbing in all the shadows with umber, and the lights with white, and succeeded in getting in the principal group." He afterwards tells us that he used the sweetener to prevent the surface interrupting him in the finishing. We find him continually removing the work he had done during the day, rubbing out heads, hands, and whole figures, notwithstanding he had prepared a careful sketch beforehand. Many other details of the progress of this picture are noted by him; but unfortunately he has omitted to name the vehicle with which it is painted. Haydon, however, who was intimate with him at this time, says that it was pure oil. Writing in 1829, he tells us:—"Wilkie was full of wax, and the Lord knows what. His first pictures will stand for ever, and so will mine, and now he has almost tempted me to quack as well as himself, with his wax and magylph. 'Solomon,' 'Jerusalem,' 'Macbeth,' 'Dentatus' are painted in pure oil, so are the 'Fiddler,' 'Politicians,' 'Card Players,' 'Chelsea Pensioners,' 'Village Wake,' in fact all his early works." Yet notwithstanding this assertion, we are inclined to think that magylph was really used. "The Blind Fiddler" stood perfectly until it was varnished about ten years ago, and then in the course of one short month it cracked in widening hair cracks down to the white ground; and as to "The Village Festival," at the time we are writing much of the thinly-painted background (more particularly the staircase and window, with the figures in that part of the composition), is entirely broken up with cracks of the same kind, which are gradually opening, and in like manner exposing the white ground of the

canvas; so that at least the assertion "that it will stand for ever" is not true, and we may be permitted to doubt also its being painted in "pure oil."

It will be seen that in our opinion pictures painted in mastic magylph do not crack when left unvarnished, but are liable to fail when this is done; yet it must be confessed that it is very doubtful if the "Fiddler" had been left unvarnished until the time spoken of above. Wilkie was evidently accustomed to have his pictures varnished very soon after their completion; perhaps agreeing with West's maxim, that you should "lock them up" with varnish as soon as possible. Thus we find an entry in Wilkie's diary in May, 1808:—"Accompanied Seguier to the Admiralty to varnish the picture of 'The Rent Day;'" and again in July, "Seguier varnished for me 'The Village Politicians,' and the sketch of Miss Phipps. So that without it was a particular wish of the owner not to have a work varnished, it would appear to be the usual practice of the painter to varnish. "The Village Festival" is differently executed from those which preceded it, the flesh and the draperies being made up of broken tints, although the general tone is grey. Wilkie had now mastered all the varied modes of execution, such as thick and thin painting, painting into a glaze, glazing, &c., although he ever used the latter quality very sparingly. The improvement in execution as well as in expression is very marked; some of the separate groups are fine, such as the miller between jollity and duty; and the varied characters of the host and his customers are true to nature. As compared with "Pitlassie Fair," a work of a somewhat parallel subject, the advance is almost that of a lifetime.

"The Village Festival" was a picture containing too many figures and too much material to permit of the painter's finishing it in time for exhibition in 1810, and Wilkie, perhaps somewhat too hastily, painted a small work to keep his place on the walls. This he called "No Fool like an Old Fool," but subsequently changed to "The Wardrobe Ransacked." His friends in the Academy thought it did not maintain his reputation; they advised him to withdraw it, and he reluctantly complied with their wishes. His biographer seems to lean to the opinion that some jealousy on the part of the members, or some secret satisfaction at seeing the sudden fame which he had achieved waning before the rising talent of Bird, was at the bottom of the recommendation; but his reasoning refutes itself. The painter's friends and companions might have erred in their counsel, but it appears from Wilkie's diary that he worked much on the rejected picture before he again submitted it to the judgment of the public; and notwithstanding that the painter was ill-represented in their exhibition, the Academy elected him in the ensuing spring to the full honours of their body.

In this year (1810) Wilkie had the first serious attack of the illness which afterwards distressingly haunted him. He complained to Dr. Baillie that he could neither paint nor think for a quarter of an hour consecutively without experiencing a giddiness almost amounting to fainting. This ended in fever, which confined him for many weeks, and prevented his painting; indeed his weakness lasted almost to the end of the year. He had long been meditating upon a scheme for profiting by the exhibition of his own works. He thought—as Fuseli

and others had done before him—that the public, which took especial pleasure in his pictures when seen with others in the Academy exhibition, would flock to a collection brought together for his own profit. He took a house, No. 87, Pall Mall, opposite the British Institution, and in May, 1812, opened a collection of his own pictures, partly new and partly borrowed from his patrons. Notwithstanding his recent election to the full honours of the Academy; and that as in the previous season he had been but poorly represented it was desirable he should justify its choice to the world, he withheld his new picture of "The Village Festival," the fame of which had, no doubt, hastened his election, and sent it, together with "The Village Politicians," "The Blind Fiddler," "The Cut Finger," "The Rent Day," "The Card Players," and several portraits, sketches, and minor works, to this private exhibition.

It is not to be wondered at that the members were vexed to see their new colleague diverting his chief works from their walls, and putting them off with mere studies and sketches; but if so, they had their revenge. Wilkie, though sufficiently a man of business and canny at a bargain, as his diary shows, was at least not fitted to puff an exhibition of his own works; and the time was yet distant when this was to become a profitable business to middle-men and dealers, who, given a banquet scene, the entry of a royal personage, or indeed any *outré* or singular work, can, by dint of sheer advertising puffery, draw large sums of money from the public, whether the art is good or bad. We are not surprised, therefore, that the attempt was unsuccessful and a loss. Wilkie was accustomed to shake his head

when the affair was mentioned. A distraint was made on his pictures for rent due *from* his landlord for the premises sublet to the painter; "The Village Holiday," as it was then called, was seized, and had to be redeemed. The only benefit accruing to the artist was that it suggested the fine subject, "Distraining for Rent," which the painter shortly commenced.

In December of the year 1812, Wilkie's father died, having lived long enough to witness the full reputation of his son. This caused a great change in the painter's household; eventually his mother and sister came to live with him at Kensington, where he had removed; and, henceforth cared for and tended by those who loved him, surrounded in his home by female influence, he had less inducement to change his bachelor condition for the married state: into which we find endeavours to tempt him by parties who would have liked to share his reputation at least, and the comforts with which it had surrounded him. Thus we trace him relating with much simplicity in his journal for 1810:—"Had a valentine to-day, from whom I know not, but certainly in the same handwriting as one I formerly received." And shortly afterwards:—"A young lady called and made use of the name of one of my friends to see my pictures; she expressed in strong terms her regret at not finding any picture of mine in the exhibition, and said she had seen a print of me, but it looked much too youthful. Though she said nothing at all improper, I am inclined to doubt her character, as well as her motive for calling on me. It is altogether a strange matter." We fancy we can see the sedate young painter of twenty-five bowing out the somewhat bold lady who would have liked to remain to

share his home. Now, with his mother and sister at hand to add to his comforts and to keep off such visitors, Wilkie was able to resist all such attractions; and having passed through his period of temptation he remained single to the last, devoting himself wholly to the art he loved.

He had exhibited his picture of "Blindman's Buff" (which he had taken in hand after "The Village Festival") among his other works in Pall Mall. He finished it for the Academy exhibition of 1813, where, according to the rules of that body, he was on this occasion to act as one of the members of the hanging committee. Many sinister remarks are made in his biography as to the arts of former councils and committees towards our painter, and the injuries he received at their hands. It is reasonable to suppose that all such committees are somewhat alike, and that painters, like other men, differ as to the comparative merits of pictures. Wilkie says himself on this occasion, "We had many a squabble, as you may suppose, during the arrangement, about who should have the best places; but as no one was admitted, this was all confined to ourselves, and although we had the interests of all the members to balance and take care of, as well as those of our own particular friends, and those of the many poor fellows who had no friends, we have adjusted them all so well that there is not a single complaint:" but he also adds with much naïveté, "The first persons we thought of were our own three selves, as you may suppose; and, acting on this principle, my picture of 'Blindman's Buff was accordingly placed *in the principal centre in the great room*—' showing that he also knew how to take care of his own interests. Not

that this is characteristic of the members of hanging committees, who often sacrifice their own works for those of their brother artists. When one of the writers was on the hanging committee with Leslie, the latter withdrew a picture of his own to make way for one that, if not more deserving, would have injured its author more, if misplaced, than could be the case with the work of a painter so distinguished as Leslie. And it is pleasant here to record that on a similar occasion the same writer was assured that when a place could not be found on the line for his picture of "Ellen Orford" (one of his works first which attracted public attention), Wilkie took down a picture of his own from the line, to give it a place. The first endeavour of the hanging committee is usually to do justice according to their best judgment, and plenty of instances might be adduced where the members have striven to take care of the interests of "the many poor fellows who have no friends."

Wilkie's next important pictures were "The Pedlar," "The Letter of Introduction," and the "Duncan Gray." These two latter are of the same size, and originally the "Duncan Gray" was painted in the same thin delicate manner, and of the same silvery tone, as the "Letter of Introduction." They were both sent to the Royal Academy in 1814, having been previously sold; the "Letter of Introduction" to Mr. Samuel Dobree, the "Duncan Gray" to Dr. Baillie. Cunningham tells us that "in less than a year Dr. Baillie exchanged it with Wilkie for the 'The Pedlar.'" To lend fresh interest to an exhibited picture, Wilkie worked anew at the "Duncan Gray," gave it some of its minute and faithful finish, and sent it to the British Institution, where it

was purchased by Lord Charles Townshend." Mulready, however, who was well acquainted with the painting of "Duncan Gray," used to say that it was originally a grey silvery picture like the "Blind Fiddler" or "Letter of Introduction," but that when nearly finished, Wilkie became enamoured of tone, and went all over the picture with asphaltum, painting into it, and repeating this process even a second time. The result was fatal to the picture; for while at Mr. Sheepshanks', into whose hands it passed from Lord Charles, it cracked and went into a very sad state, of which a photographic record has been preserved. Mulready, who was the authority appointed by the deed of gift to the nation to sanction any reparations, had it given into the hands of a restorer to put it into a state for exhibition. By him the cracks were filled up; and, much to the disgust of Mulready, one hand which was in a very bad state (the left hand of the old father) was entirely repainted, and is to this day a blot on this otherwise very fine work. It is now again slowly parting either in the old cracks, or probably new ones are forming. Mulready himself sat to Wilkie for the "Duncan Gray," Mulready's father for the father of the unwilling damsel; and for her Wilkie's sister sat. Sketches for some of the hands in varied actions are among the artist's drawings in the collection at Kensington Museum.

In 1814, Wilkie made his first trip to the Continent, remaining five or six weeks in France, where he visited the schools and galleries, but seems to have come back without being much impressed by French Art. On his return he commenced the picture of "Distraining for Rent," a work of great dramatic merit, bought by the directors of the British Institution, and afterwards

for many years in the possession of W. Wells, Esq., of Redleaf. This thinly painted picture, seen in Mr. Wells' gallery about twenty years ago, was in a very fine state, but latterly it has given way in hair cracks throughout a large portion of the surface. "The Penny Wedding" followed in 1819, and in 1820, "The Reading a Will," a very characteristic subject, said to have been suggested to him by Jack Bannister, the comedian; it was a commission from the King of Bavaria, and almost the only instance in which a British painter has been asked to paint for a foreign gallery. When Wilkie visited Munich in 1826, he naturally wished to see his picture, which was understood to have been hung with the works of the older masters, and to note how it stood in their company.

But he found the king who had given him the commission, dead, and the picture sealed up with the other royal treasures, preparatory to their sale. An application to see his own work was, however, favourably received, and the seal of the apartment broken in the presence of a commissioner, who accompanied him for that purpose. Wilkie says of the work, "its look and hue gratified me exceedingly: it looked rich and powerful, and remarkably in harmony with the fine specimens of Dutch art which surrounded it:" he adds, "observed the picture had been varnished about a twelvemonth ago, on looking narrowly I could discover the beginning of small cracks in the varnish." These cracks subsequently enlarged greatly; thirty years after they had become wide and deep; but in a second visit to Munich which we made in 1863, on a careful inspection of the picture, the evil did not seem to be progressing. It is now among the modern works in the new Pinacothek, and

it is some comfort, in the wreck of English pictures, to think that ours are not singular in this respect; many German works in the same gallery being in a far worse state than the "Reading of a Will." This picture was hung in the place of honour at Somerset House in the exhibition of 1820, and greatly increased his reputation. Yet we cannot agree in Cunningham's assertion that "no painter existed equal to dispute the palm of public favour with Wilkie." Mulready had already exhibited his "Barber's Shop," his "Fight Interrupted," "Idle Boys," and "Wolf and Lamb," and was preparing for next year's exhibition the touching picture of "The Convalescent from Waterloo." Leslie, also, was rising into fame, and with two such rivals it was much that Wilkie could hold his own.

He was now about to commence one of his most important pictures, one that eventually became almost historical, although not undertaken with that idea. He tells us that "in the summer of 1816, the year after the Battle of Waterloo," the great duke requested to have a picture by him, the subject to be "British Soldiers Regaling at Chelsea;" and he adds, "in justice to the duke as well as to myself, it is but right to state, that the introduction of the *Gazette* was a subsequent idea of my own to unite the interest, and give importance to the business of the picture." This is best seen in a letter written by the painter in 1816 to Haydon, wherein he describes a visit from the duke, who called by appointment to give a commission for the work. The duke looked at his pictures and sketches with much attention, but was silent. "At last Lady Argyle (who was of the party) began to tell me that the duke wished me to paint

him a picture, and was explaining what the subject was, when the duke, who was at that time seated in a chair, turned up his lively eye to me, and said that the subject should be a parcel of old soldiers, assembled together on their seats at the door of a public-house, chewing tobacco, and talking over their old stories. He thought they might be in any uniform, and that it should be at some public-house in the King's Road, Chelsea. I said this would make a most beautiful picture, and that it only wanted some story or principal incident to connect the figures together. He said, perhaps playing at skittles would do, or any other game. When I proposed that one might be reading a newspaper aloud to the rest, and that in making a sketch of it many other incidents would occur, in this he perfectly agreed, and said I might send a sketch to him when he was abroad."

Wilkie made various sketches for the duke's approval, and after consultation with him and with Mr. Long (afterwards Lord Farnborough), he began to work with great delight on his subject, and worked at it so unceasingly that his health began again to suffer; a little relaxation, however, restored him sufficiently to complete it for exhibition in 1822. It greatly advanced the painter's fame. High and low flocked to see it. The soldiers to find out their comrades in arms, who in India, in the Peninsula, and finally at Waterloo, had fought with them under the command of the great captain. The public were delighted with it, the artists were equally delighted, and the visitors to the exhibition had to be railed off from it, waiting *en queue* their turn to pass in front.

"Reading the Gazette of the Battle of Waterloo"

is one of Wilkie's best pictures; in it he carried his early style to its completion, and has shown all those qualities of thought and invention, and of the cumulation of episodal details which make his works, like those of Hogarth, pictorial histories rather than mere pictures. The subject or incident is a good one. The veterans who have gone through their day of strife and come off, if not wholly unscathed, yet victorious from a hundred fights, are receiving the news of the great victory won by the young who have succeeded them in the ranks of battle. The locality is well chosen. In the background is Chelsea Hospital, that restful paradise of the battered veteran, misty and beautiful in the mid-day sun. The wayside is lined with taverns, blissful halting-places to these loquacious heroes, who love, above all things, to drink and "fight their battles o'er again." And over the dark wall on the right is that place of last repose, where rank and file, soldier and officer, rest together from their earthly labours and fight no more.

In the midst of the roadway, seated at a deal table, are some of the Chelsea pensioners, smoking and drinking with their younger comrades of the line and the guards. A hussar orderly has just ridden up with a copy of the *Gazette*, and one of the old heroes is reading it aloud to the group, who neglect the beer and the pipe to rejoice in the news of the glorious victory. On the left, a young soldier is repeating the news in the ear of a deaf and somewhat imbecile collegian, and beyond them a soldier of "the Blues" turns fondly to his wife, and raises his crowing babe triumphantly aloft—peace is come! peace which will leave him awhile with those he loves. Above them a jovial group, from the windows of

the "Duke of York," listen eagerly to catch the words of the reader. The composition is filled up with many figures—the negro bandsman, the one-legged veteran now turned civilian, the oyster wife opening her luxuries for their delectation, the Scotch Highlander, and the figures that lead the eye away into the picture and the distance.

The features of the background, while they are felicitously pictorial, are literally exact. Our young days were passed in this very locality, for we were at school in Chelsea. Then, and even now, in a degree, "Jews' Row—" for so the road leading to the college was called —daily presented such a scene as this would have been prior to the arrival of the joyful messenger. And from the "Duke of York," to the curious old bow-fronted wooden tavern, the "Snow Shoes" and the "Royal Hospital," the last in the row, a range of public-houses line the path. The iron gate on the left was there, perhaps is even there still; many of the veterans introduced into the group were then well known to us boys, to whom the college was a playground and place of resort: we used to go and see the old men fire their one volley of the year on Oak-Apple Day, or the final salute over the grave of some comrade who had passed away for ever. The collegian eating oysters was "Old Ball," who in his days of rest had resumed an earlier trade, and was botcher to the school; equally well-known were the characters in the Welsh wig, and the deaf old man in the foreground.

How different is this picture to the "Greenwich Hospital and Naval Heroes" (a clever work), painted by John Burnet for the duke, as its companion. Wilkie's work strikes us for its life-likeness and reality. Burnet's

companions well with it as a composition, and has all the well-worked incidents for making a picture; but the old men, instead of being very literal and individual, are affable old tars, to whom the boys of the naval school, like lads tamed for the occasion, are bringing their quadrants and sectors, to confer with their amiable seniors how to take the longitude, or keep a ship's reckoning, while the stage sailor waves his hat with a hurrah, and a banquet is set out under the flag-draped trees, that they may all feast together. Wilkie's soldiers, whether serving or superannuated, are not only types of the species, but most characteristic individuals; the locality, as has been said, is topographically correct, the very mid-day sun shines from its true place at the hour of the day chosen.

It is delightful, after seeing the decaying state of so many of Wilkie's pictures, to find this one uncracked and sound. It has been what is technically called "painted into a glaze" throughout, apparently bone brown, with perhaps, from the greyness of the half tints when they melt into the shadows, the addition of a little black. The heads have the appearance of being completed at once, and not gone over and over in seeking expression. The brown ground in the shadows has the solid colour painted into it, so that the ground rarely appears through; thus the brown horse of the hussar, and the wall of the burying-ground, also in shadow, have the shadows solid; and this is so throughout, with the exception of the shadow from the chair of the deaf man. Wilkie, it is said, on his return from Italy, complained that in English pictures the lights looked flat and empty, and the shadows worked into and solid; and this picture has these

qualities, while in the next important work he painted, "The Parish Beadle," the shadows are even still more solid and black. He changed after his first return, and the "John Knox" was the result. It is worth noting that this Waterloo picture, which has stood so well, has certainly been varnished.

"The Gazette of the Battle of Waterloo" off his mind and completed to the satisfaction both of the public and its owner, Wilkie prepared the sketch for the picture commissioned by George IV., as a companion to the "Penny Wedding" and "Blindman's Buff." A little elated, perhaps, with the success of his semi-historical work, he pitched on a truly national subject of the same character, and made a sketch for "John Knox Preaching before the Lords of the Congregation." But when it was named to his Majesty, it did not meet with his approval; he liked Wilkie's humorous homely subjects better, and John Knox was laid aside for the present, the painter proceeding with the "Parish Beadle," which he exhibited in 1823. His early art culminated in this work; it is true he painted one or two small works in the same style before his long illness drove him abroad, but they are works of less than his usual vigour and power. The "Parish Beadle" is a beautiful picture for character, expression and colour, although a little black in the shadows. The patient submissive imbecility of the boy with the monkey, the anger of the Savoyard mother, and her meretricious-looking husband with a ruffianly cast in his eye, the truculent burly beadle, are extremely characteristic. The action of the woman is excellent, her fingers ready to score marks of her wrath on the official's face; the poor dog with his tail between

his legs, and his gaudy trappings (a beautiful passage of colour by the way), the bear and bear-ward bringing up the rear. The difference between the burly bumbledom of the full-blown man of authority, and that of his assistant clad in the left-off clothes of his superior in office—the very boys jeering the Bohemians they so lately feared, but now may revile, seeing they are under the wings of authority itself in its laced coat and cocked-hat —are all excellently chosen and depicted.

In the autumn of 1822, George IV. determined to make a royal progress to Edinburgh, and as it was the first time that such a visit had been made by a sovereign of the House of Hanover, all true Scotchmen were on the alert. Amongst others, Wilkie wended his way thither to seek a subject connected with the king's visit; intending to paint either his first step on Scottish land, his visit to the Castle, his appearance at kirk, or his entrance to the ancient palace of the Scottish monarchs at Holyrood. From various causes he chose the last of these subjects for his canvas.

In the following July, Sir Henry Raeburn, who had been the king's limner for Scotland, died, and Sir Robert Peel recommended Wilkie to his Majesty for the appointment. This was graciously acceded to, and the painter began to work diligently on his historical picture of "The Royal Entrance." His Majesty was pleased to approve of the choice, and promised to sit for it when the work was sufficiently advanced. But the king had his own idea of a dignified attitude, and posed to show how he received the keys of the seneschal: much to the distraction of the painter; added to this there had been far too much of stage clap-trap in the whole affair—fat city aldermen clad

in Highland tartans, lowland Scots assuming a dress quite foreign to them or to their fathers. Courtly sitters also troubled him; the work proceeded slowly; appointments were not kept as by the humble models he had heretofore employed; nevertheless he laboured on, paying another visit to Scotland to sketch the details for the picture, the regalia, the landscape-background, the dresses, and whatever might help him—and at the same time having an eye to the subject on which he had set his heart, "The Preaching of Knox." While in Scotland he was induced to undertake a life-size whole-length portrait of Lord Kellie—wishing, as he says to his brother, "to have the practice of painting large, in case I should have anything to paint for the king in the same way."

His Holyrood picture had, no doubt, caused him much trouble and anxiety, and while away, troubles began to gather around him; his mother sickened, and after a slight improvement, relapsed and died ere his return. His brother James, with a wife and family, came back from Canada invalided, and a defaulter: Wilkie not only having to help him, but being also his surety for 1,000*l.*, he became liable for that sum. James died shortly after his return, and early in the new year, 1825, the painter learnt that his elder brother David, then in India, had succumbed to the climate, and left a widow and four children imperfectly provided for. His sister also, on the point of marriage, lost the man of her choice by death. This accumulation of sorrows weighed heavily on the sensitive mind of the painter, already overtaxed by his art labours, and his old malady returned upon him; he managed to finish some small works for the exhibition, and then was advised to

seek a renewal of his health in foreign travel and an entire cessation from his art.

Wilkie having tried the waters of Cheltenham without success, set off in July 1825 for Paris, in company with Newton the painter. Here he was soon joined by his cousin and future travelling companion, David Lester. His malady was singular; physical weakness there was none. He himself says:—"Walking uphill, or to the tops of spires of churches, has no effect upon me. But he adds:—"Reading, writing, or any sort of study, except a little at a time, produces weariness and pain." Finding no relief in Paris, although plenty of contrary opinions as to his case, he started with Lester for Italy. At Florence he was joined by his friends Hilton and Phillips, with whom he carefully examined the works in that treasury of art. And then by easy journeys he proceeded to Rome, arriving in the middle of November of the same year.

Wilkie's health had gradually improved as he journeyed southward; but in Rome, the fever of admiration which was on him in viewing the great works of the greatest painters, and criticising them in company with Hilton and Phillips, somewhat retarded his improvement. The impression made upon him, was, however, such as to determine him to modify his method and style, if health permitted him to renew his practice on his return to England. This fever of excitement induced him to leave Rome to visit other schools, and the works of other masters. Ere he left in February 1826, he heard of new troubles in the failure of his publishers, Hurst and Robinson. But though the shock was great, hopes of returning health enabled him to bear it. He

says :—"With health I could surmount everything; and feeling strongly as I do what I said to you in my last, 'that it is in health alone I can be either better or worse,' I really must say that I am less affected by this new threatening disaster, than with any former one by which we have been afflicted." David Lester also, his travelling companion, received at the same time bad news and a recall; and he writes, "The accumulation of evils that are said to have had a share in bringing on my illness, have now come to such a height, that one would doubt whether recovery is possible. All, however, here assert, doctors as well as others, that I am recovering." And recovering he was, notwithstanding his troubles. He began to make some coloured sketches in the Sistine, the first art-work he had done for twelve months. He left Rome for Naples on the 25th of February, and arrived on the 28th. Here new troubles awaited him; his hopes that Hurst and Co. might get through their difficulties were quenched: his bills were returned dishonoured.

Again he journeyed northward; at Bologna, as the year advanced, the symptoms of his complaint a second time became alarming. He had followed the advice of his physicians, and lived abstemiously; but he found it only increased the evil. On the 17th of April, while at Venice, there is this touching entry in his journal:—"Sent Mr. Rice an order on Coutts and Co., for bills on Hurst and Robinson, amounting to 1,730*l.* 11*s.*, the amount of my very heavy and hard-earned claims upon their house." And can we wonder to find, on the 26th, "I have now been eight months in Italy, and have seen a world of objects for amusement and for study. Every-

thing, under happier circumstances, would have delighted and improved me, but for one object of my journey have been quite unavailable, that of the recovery of health." Trouble still gathered around him. "Had it come to its height with them?" he asks his brother. And when he recurs to the bond of security he had given to the Ordnance, he says that, as he walks the Rialto, he can but picture to himself "the pound of flesh and the forfeited bond." He was advised to spend another year in Italy, but finding that through many physicians he grew none the better, but rather the worse, he determined to visit Germany. Thither, then, he shaped his course from Venice.

Wilkie remained during the summer in Germany, visiting Dresden, Prague, and Vienna. He tried the baths of Teplitz, but found no relief; and still resting on the advice of his various physicians, in the autumn revisited Italy. He remained there during the winter, fêted and made much of by our countrymen, and apparently progressing slowly to health. Beginning by painting "three half-hours in a day," he more or less completed three pictures. About the end of April he wrote to his brother Thomas:—"I have again begun to paint; this is an immense thing for me." He soon after left Rome. He has given us some hints of his new practice and new mode of execution. Writing of the pictures he painted there, he says:—"Every figure and every group required to be preconceived and pre-arranged —no changings, no rubbings out, no repetitions—every touch was final. The last of the three was painted up at once on the bare canvas, and was left in that state when packed off for London."

He made some short stay in Geneva, still progressing with his art, and then resolved, instead of returning, to pay a visit to Spain, almost an unknown land to that generation of artists. He arrived in Madrid early in October, 1827, was delighted with the novelty of Spanish art—looked much at Velasquez, an artist but imperfectly known out of Spain—painted several pictures, now in the Royal Collection—and writing home to his sister, says :—"Will the London public, with my former style in recollection, judge of these new subjects, and new manner of treating them, with the same favour as those who see them now for the first time? This is what I mean to try. I have now, from the study of the old masters, adopted a bolder and more effective style; and one result is rapidity. The quantity of work I have got through, all seem surprised at. If it excites the same interest in London that it does here, it will probably bring better times." On leaving Spain, he said :—"I return highly satisfied with my journey. The seven months and ten days passed in Spain I may reckon as the best employed time of my professional life."

We have seen how deeply Wilkie was afflicted by the loss of friends and relatives, added to his heavy and repeated pecuniary losses and difficulties, brought on by no imprudence of his own; and it is instructive to compare the difference of his bearing under his troubles to that of his friend, Haydon. It is true they were of very different temperaments, but while the one acted as if genius was to be the excuse for intruding his affairs for ever on public attention, the other used the most prudent means to regain his health, and then set himself diligently to retrieve his deranged affairs; and he succeeded.

Wilkie's illness, and the foreign journey that it necessitated, brought to a close the first period of his art. Hitherto he had usually invented the subject of his picture, as well as the mode of treating it. He had sought to illustrate the homely pleasures of his countrymen—the domestic drama of their every-day life. The figures which he introduced were such as daily surrounded him, characters which he selected, and vivified by expression suitable to his simple stories. These stories were such as all would understand, both high and low, and the art was allied to them; pleasant in its appeal to the eye, both as to colour, and light and shade, and carefully executed without over-much finish; what wonder is it that his pictures were so deservedly popular! Moreover, Wilkie was happy in finding in his countrymen, Raimbach and Burnet, men so well qualified to spread a knowledge of his pictures by the engraver's art. As fast as Wilkie painted, Raimbach and Burnet engraved, and as the subjects appealed equally to all classes, and to foreigners as well as natives, these engravings found a ready sale, and added greatly to the popularity and reputation of the painter.

We have seen a change coming over him before his Italian and Spanish journey; the position he now occupied as king's limner opened up a new species of labour, and a new source of profit, which he would no doubt have followed out, even without the stimulant of his foreign observations. As his difficulties increased, arising from his long abstentation from painting, his losses from over-trading capitalists, or from the misfortunes of his relatives, he began to find his early art too laborious; he felt, as Cunningham says, "that

if he continued to work in his usual laborious style of detail and finish, he should never achieve independence;" and while these thoughts troubled him, he saw the master works of Velasquez, and instantly became a worshipper. With his views changed as to art execution, he returned from the Continent to his duties as Court limner, required to paint whole-lengths and half-lengths to command, and still further to loosen his hand and enlarge his style. The first thing to be noted of the pictures painted in Spain, and generally of the new style he had adopted, is its facility and the absence of the minute finish that characterizes his early works; there is also a change in the nature of his subjects which are of a higher class than formerly. This may have partly arisen from the incidents which came under his eyes during his journey, but had in some degree been adopted before he left England—when he was engaged on the historical picture of "John Knox."

Most of the pictures actually painted in Spain are in the possession of her Majesty,—"The Guerilla Council of War," "The Guerilla taking Leave of his Confessor," "The Maid of Saragossa," as well as "The Guerilla's Return to his Family." These are all painted into a brown key, and seem completed at once; they are fine in general effect and tone, and have a Spanish air about them, but are more defective in drawing than his earlier works. The best of the series is, however, that of the "Two Spanish Monks in the Cathedral of Toledo," which he painted in England. It belongs to the Marquis of Lansdowne. The subject is "The Confessional." A passive old monk is listening to the tale of the young

one's fiery temptations — temptations he may himself have known once, but which have long passed from him. He listens with somewhat of irritable impatience to the deep earnest outpourings of the younger one. The expressive hands, as usual in Wilkie, are a perfect study for action, the tone and accessories in fine keeping with the solemn subject. The confessional in which the monk sits is painted of a full rich brown in all the darks; this brown is laid on so thickly, that it has even run down, as asphaltum will do; yet there is no change, and the picture is not cracked at all. The brown used appears to be bone brown, but with what vehicle? The brown is laid so full from the brush, and so much at once, that it looks like a raised ornament on the confessional at the back of the figures; the colour is in lumps on the incense burner in the foreground, and has streamed down in the darks of the book which lies beside it, but yet there is neither crack nor corrugation. It is doubtful if it has been varnished. The Spanish pictures belonging to her Majesty are also much loaded in the brown darks, but not so much so as "The Confessional," and they are equally sound. Painted in Madrid, as we find from the journal, and from the painter's signature to the works, he was perhaps out of the way of colourmen's materials —and his pictures are the sounder for it.

When the Spanish pictures were exhibited, they raised a storm of criticism; all reverted to his early art, and to the class of subjects which had won him fame, and few were ready to admit that the change was for the better. But although the art-world, true to its first love, hesitated to consider Wilkie's change of style an improvement, we, who at a distance of time compare

the two, are able to give a less biased judgment, and can find many beauties in these works. It is rarely that an artist goes so completely out of himself as did Wilkie; between Mulready's first and last style there was almost as great a change, but it was very gradual. Wilkie made the contrast far more startling by the sudden change. He had begun to loosen his hand before leaving England, as we see in "The Pensioners," but on and after his Spanish journey he not only ignored all executive finish, but considered it as tending to bad art. Thus we find him writing to Sir W. Knighton in 1838, of the exhibition of that year, "A smooth and finished style also gains, and is indeed exacted, bringing us nearer to Wynants, Gerard Dow, and Mieris, and aiming at that which our own great masters had not, and which the old great masters we value most among all the schools had not." Also, when on his last journey, he visited some of the Dutch collections, he writes,—"One feels wearied with the perfections of the minor Dutch paintings, and finds relief in contemplating even the imperfect sketches and incomplete thoughts of those great Italians." True, no doubt, but showing the great change of feeling travel had wrought in him.

It must be allowed that there is great beauty in the rich tone, and the mellifluent melting of the colour into it, in these latter works; and we have already said that the subjects chosen are of a higher class; but the rich tone was obtained at too great a sacrifice of permanency; and in choosing historical rather than merely dramatic subjects, Wilkie shut himself out from his strongest quality—character. Moreover, there can be little doubt

that the change led him out of his depth and beyond his powers. Although he drew readily and imitated his model well, he never was a good draughtsman, and when he attempted beauty his defects became apparent; still more so when he increased the size of his pictures, and introduced figures of the scale of life. He says himself that the critics thought that the helmet did not come down enough over the face of Sir David Baird. It is many years since it was exhibited, but we well remember that the effect was as if the general had a difficulty in balancing it, and was thinking of that more than of Tippoo. As to his powers of foreshortening, let any one examine the head of the whispering girl in the "Peep of Day Boys" (National Gallery No. 332): not only is it impossible to place it properly on the shoulders, but the lines of the features have no perspective. The left shoulder and bosom of the principal figure are also very ill-drawn, and the drapery is an undistinguishable mass. Again, in "The First Ear-ring," the face of the young mother, though in many respects the figure is charming, is very ill-drawn; and this is the case with many of his latter works. Yet, whatever the defects, there is a charm about the playfulness of "The Spanish Mother," a deep earnestness in the "Columbus," and in the "Two Monks," that gives these works a high place in art; while the "Knox," (now, alas! sadly changed,) in the state it left the painter's hands, added to many of the best qualities of Wilkie's early pictures the higher claims of historic art.

Though not insensible to the opinion of the public and of his brother artists, the painter himself was well satisfied with the change, and settled down to com-

plete his engagements. "The Entry of the King to Holyrood" had to be finished, and his Majesty had also commissioned a whole-length of himself in the Highland costume. Others also sought for portraits, and, for a time, Wilkie was much occupied in this branch of his art. Notwithstanding the troublesome nature of the work, Holyrood was completed and exhibited in 1830. It adds nothing to the painter's reputation. In the early part of the year, Sir Thomas Lawrence died, and many thought Wilkie ought to be his successor. Sir Walter Scott, writing to him, says, "The loss to the Academy is no doubt very great: a star has fallen, a great artist is no more! I cannot but think the loss will be filled up, however, so far as the presidency is concerned, by adding it to the designation on this letter. All who have heard you, speak in high terms of your powers of eloquence; and of your talents as an artist there can be but one sentiment. I heartily wish, for the honour of the Academy and the electors, that they may be of my mind, and I am sure that the judgment will be approved by all Europe." But the Academy thought otherwise; although the king had notified to the painter on the morning of the election, his appointment to the vacant post of principal painter in ordinary, the members elected Shee; and it is even said that only one vote, that of his devoted friend Collins, was given for Wilkie. Wilkie himself was wise enough to swallow quietly his disappointment, if it were one, and to busy himself with his portraits, and his long-delayed picture of the preaching of the great Scottish reformer. He resumed this picture with every determination to make it a great success; the subject was a popular one, studied

before the painter left for his long Continental journey; it was founded on the principles of his early style, linked with all his sympathies, and peopled with his countrymen; the figures not too large for his powers. It proved one of the most successful pictures of his second style.

Wilkie had always used nature as largely as possible in the progress of his pictures, seeking out the most characteristic models, the most suitable and picturesque dresses and accessories. At the time the Knox was on the easel, the celebrated Edward Irving was pouring forth his fervid eloquence to warn a London audience of the second advent of our Lord. Not bound by the staid proprieties of the Establishment, and hurried away by his own earnestness, his action was often perfectly unrestrained. Wilkie studied him for the great reformer; the action he has chosen we have often seen when Irving in Regent-square was preaching his sermons on the "perilous times," and he even sat to Wilkie for the expressive head.

As usual the painter visited the locality of his picture. He found the pulpit of the great reformer stowed away, in company with the gallows, in a cellar of the old town; and one of Wilkie's young friends made a careful drawing of it for his use. For this picture Wilkie resorted to another expedient to enable him to get the fullest impression of his subject. To study the light and shade, and relative relief of the several groups and figures, he modelled them small, draped them, and placed them in a box fitted up to represent the interior of St. Andrews. An engraver who lived in the neighbourhood of the painter, and who

dabbled a little in painting himself, affecting, however, "the grand style," took occasion to sneer at this practice of Wilkie's, and to instance it as a great want of originality on his part. "The whole scene," said he, "was set up in a box with little draped dolls for the figures: any one could paint a picture in that way." It would have been well for him to have tried—even when Wilkie's skill and knowledge had arranged the groups—and he would have found how little value such helps are without the genius to use them. This practice Wilkie, no doubt, adopted on other occasions: he tells Lady Baird in 1837, "The figure of Tippoo Saib I have taken great pains with, and have been making a model of the scene for the light and shadow;" in fact, Wilkie knew how difficult good art is with every aid that can be had, and was far too wise to throw away any assistance he could obtain; and the result of the care and pains he took, was usually an assured success.

During the period which had elapsed since his return from Spain, Wilkie had been much employed in portraiture, both of the members of the Royal Family and others. In 1833 he exhibited his whole length of the Duke of Sussex, of which Cunningham, in that spirit of partisanship which seems necessary when one Scotsman writes of another, speaks as "that *first of all modern portraits*, for truth of character and harmonious brightness of colour, the Duke of Sussex, as Earl of Inverness, in the costume of a Highland chief. Against it no picture in the exhibition of 1833 could stand: it seemed to lighten all around." He also painted William IV. and his Queen, the Duke of Wellington for the Marquis of Salisbury, and many others.

As a portrait painter, Wilkie succeeded worst in the most important part. When first painted, his portraits looked well as pictures; the colour and general distribution being mostly agreeable; but the heads wanted drawing, and worse still, wanted high character. Wilkie had not the power of either Reynolds or Gainsborough to seize the mental characteristics of his sitter, or to give the best expression; in some cases the heads look as if the painter had made a vain endeavour to coax the paint into a reluctant likeness: the hair is also a difficulty, it seems full of a fatty pomade, stiff and colourless. The head of J. Daniell, R.A. (National Gallery, No. 231), will illustrate our remarks. It must be at once conceded that this is a very poor and unimportant sketch by our painter; but the defects in method, the want of drawing, the blocked out look of the whole, are more or less apparent in his very best works. The portrait of William IV. at Windsor has the same qualities in a subdued degree as that alluded to above; and even in his small portraits done in early life, and of a size in which he was more at home, we feel a certain degree of vulgarity, and that the best characteristics of the sitter are not given. No doubt portraits added greatly to his income, but as surely little to his fame. In 1836, William IV. bestowed on him the honour of knighthood, and when he died, and our present beloved Queen came to the throne, Wilkie retained his office in the household, and was required to paint her Majesty's first council; a subject of high interest, but carried out too quickly to be entirely satisfactory: and its present state, we grieve to say, is most deplorable.

Large canvases, and life-size figures, as well as por-

traits, now occupied his time: "Napoleon and the Pope at Fontainebleau," "The Empress Josephine and the Fortune-Teller," "Sir David Baird discovering the Body of Tippoo Saib," were among the works he exhibited. To our mind they are far less satisfactory than the smaller pictures resulting from his Spanish journey.

In the autumn of 1840, Wilkie suddenly determined on a voyage to the East. In the full practice of his profession, with commissions for pictures and portraits uncompleted, he resolved to visit the localities of the sacred narrative, and, as a painter, to try to realize for himself, as much as possible, the scenery and accessories of Scripture history. Much speculation was rife at the time as to his inducements to take this lengthened journey; but the painter has himself so plainly expressed them in his letter from Jerusalem to Sir Robert Peel, that we cannot do better than quote his own words of explanation "why, with pressing occupations at home, and without a pursuit to demand such a field of study," he "should yet mount the staff and scallop shell for such a peregrination." "It is a fancy or belief," he continues, "that the art of our time and of our British people may reap some benefit, that has induced me to undertake this journey. It is to see, to inquire, and to judge, not whether I can, but whether those who are younger, or with far higher attainments and powers, may not in future be required, in the advance and spread of our knowledge, to refer at once to the localities of Scripture events when the great work is to be essayed of representing Scripture history. Great as the assistance—I might say the inspiration—which the art of painting has

derived from the illustration of Christianity, and great as have been the talent and genius this high walk of art has called into being, yet it is remarkable that none of the great painters to whom the world has hitherto looked for the visible appearance of Scripture scenes and feelings, have ever visited the Holy Land." After adverting to the attempted revival at Munich of sacred art from Byzantine, or early Italian sources, and doubting its propriety, he adds:—"The time is now come when our supply in this walk of art must be drawn from the fountain-head. . . . . I am highly grateful at being permitted to see with my own natural eyes what Jerusalem in our day can still present to us." His letter gives, no doubt, the main inducement for the journey; perhaps, something of disappointment that his latter pictures had not won popular applause may have conduced to it, and some prospect of a new field of art, and visions of extended fame,—fame, alas! which he was not to achieve—also influenced him.

He started to the East in company with one of the Woodburns; going by way of the Hague, Cologne, Munich, and Vienna, and dwelling with renewed pleasure on the works of art in the countries he passed through. From Vienna he took steamer on the Danube, and reached Constantinople on the 4th of October, 1840. Here he was delayed some time on account of the war in Syria, and made use of his somewhat enforced leisure to paint the Sultan. As soon as the cessation of hostilities permitted, he set forth for the final object of his journey, by way of Smyrna and Beyrout, and reached Jerusalem on the 27th of February. There, and in the neighbourhood, he remained about five weeks, deeply

impressed with all he saw, and making sketches and notes of local incidents. On his return, while at Alexandria, he commenced a portrait of the Pasha of Egypt, and after his long absence began to weary for home. He has carefully noted in his journal the chief incidents of his travel; these, with the interesting letters he wrote while absent, to various friends, will be found in his Life by Cunningham, from which we have obtained some of our data.

Wilkie left Alexandria in the Oriental steamer, apparently in his usual health. He had had occasional attacks of illness on his voyage, but nothing serious; indeed, on his fifty-fifth birthday, which he spent at Constantinople, he writes in his journal:—"Many circumstances to rejoice and be thankful for, good health being one." At Malta, however, he committed an imprudence in eating fruits and ices, and had an attack of some complaint in the stomach; it yielded apparently to the care of the surgeon, but recurred during the night previous to the vessel's leaving the island. Wilkie was found fast sinking when the ship cleared the harbour, and died within an hour, on the 1st of June, 1841. The vessel put back, but the authorities would not allow the body to be landed; and that same evening it was committed to the deep with all due rites and honours. His fame and its due commemoration was left to the care of his countrymen; but his mortal remains it was not given to them to enshrine.

Had Wilkie lived to return to England with the sketches he had made during his visit to the East, we may presume that he would have again changed his class of subjects and style of treating them, if not his mode of

execution. He would not only have painted Oriental but most likely religious subjects. But it was ordained otherwise, and we can only speculate upon the effect his new views on these subjects might have had on the world. For our own part we do not feel that he would have succeeded in religious art, although his pictures of Oriental life might have been successful from their very novelty. Perhaps, however deeply we must regret his loss, it was better for his fame that he did not live to make the attempt. To have opened new ground, to have directed the way to younger men—men not as yet committed to any walk of art—and to have shown by the sketches he had accumulated that there was a new source of inspiration open to them: this is a great result; this he did, and it has borne fruit; many of the rising artists of the day having followed, and followed successfully, in his track.

In person, Wilkie was tall and somewhat ungainly in figure, and ever of a pale and colourless complexion. We have seen that through life he was subject to continual attacks of sickness; his constitution was too weak to bear the strain and confinement of continuous labour. Perhaps the world is not sufficiently aware how laborious art is, especially when it rests, as Wilkie's early art did, on the truthful imitation of individual nature. Having conceived his subject, the artist has a world of difficulties in realizing it: difficulties in finding suitable characters, irritation from troublesome or restless models — or models who stiffen into rigidity in attempting the commonest action or expression; or are unable to retain either, while the painter looks from his palette to his canvas. All these, added to

the difficulties of the mere executive of art, are very exhausting, and a great strain upon human endurance.

Wilkie's art was of a character particularly laborious, and his health unequal; this, and perhaps his native temperament, made him frugal; but he was very just, and generous even in his justice, in fulfilling his engagements. He was of a very cautious disposition, slow to make promises, but careful to keep them when made; and—like all Scotsmen—clinging strongly to his countrymen. Some good instances of this are related in his Life, and one of his colleagues on the hanging committee tells how Wilkie carried a picture about from room to room for two or three days, trying it in every conceivable place in hopes of hanging it especially well. "Why do you carry that picture about?" asked his brother member. "It's Geddes'," answered Wilkie. But he was mistaken; it proved to be the work of an Englishman, and the picture was immediately dropped, to take the common fate. On the same occasion, his two companions being away for a short time, found on their return one of the rooms hung entirely with Scotch pictures on the line. Wilkie had taken advantage of their short absence to serve his countrymen; but this arrangement was soon set aside: "This won't do!" they both exclaimed, "it is a perfect Scotland yard: take it down, carpenter!"

Wilkie's mind was very slow, but fixed itself pertinaceously on any subject, and this led him to brood on whatever struck him. Like all Scotchmen, he was not alive to pun or equivoque. We have heard Callcott tell curious stories of this lack of readiness. On one occasion, when they had been at an evening party at Sir John Swinburne's, and came away together, Wilkie sat

in the cab, entirely absorbed and silent. After some time he suddenly cried out, "Verra good! Verra good!" and on his companion asking him what was very good, Wilkie spelt out and put together a little witty equivoque whose sparkle had amused the company in the early part of the evening, and of which Wilkie had been chewing the undigested cud, unable to comprehend it, until he was half way on his road home from the party.

He was fond of society—especially the society of his brother artists, and entered with great earnestness into any amusements connected with art; we frequently find him masquerading while in Rome. On one occasion he tells us how Campbell, Westmacott, Severn and Rennie got up a little masquing at Torlonia's, wherein David Leslie, his cousin, figured as Lord Dundee, "and I, in a Vandyke dress, such as the Marquis of Montrose might wear." Washington Irving, in the fourth volume of his Life, describes Wilkie at a fancy ball at Madrid acting a picture "in costume, putting one hand on the pummel of his sword, and extending the other, as he had seen it in some old painting; occasionally he would step out of his frame to talk to some one, and then go back." We can picture to ourselves the business-like way in which he would enter into his part and, with great *affability* of manner, go in and out of his subject.

His early art certainly made a great impression on the English School; showing how Dutch art might be nationalized, and story and sentiment added to scenes of common life treated with truth and individuality. As to his middle time, such pictures as the "John Knox" also had their influence on the school, and the new mode of execution as supported by Wilkie's authority,

a very evil influence; bringing discredit upon English pictures as entirely wanting in permanency. His methods and the pigments he used were soon discarded in England; but at the time they influenced, and have continued to influence, his countrymen long after his death. The effect of his Eastern journey, in inducing young painters to visit the East, we have already noticed.

CHAPTER VIII.

WILLIAM MULREADY, R.A.

Early Inclination to Landscape Art—"Old Kaspar" his first Subject Picture—Studies the Dutch School—"The Carpenter's Shop" described—And "The Barber's Shop"—Assists in Panorama and Scene Painting—His Landscapes and Art-progress—"Idle Boys"—Elected Associate of the Academy—Commences his "Fight Interrupted"—And gains his Election as Royal Academician—Forms his own Manner—"The Convalescent from Waterloo"—Its Mode of Painting—Transition and Change of Manner—"The Young Painter"—"Interior of an English Cottage"—Combines his highest Qualities in Art—His "Out-door Scenes"—"The Seven Ages" described—Attains the Perfection of his second Manner—Culmination of his Art—"The Whistonian Controversy"—"Choosing the Wedding Gown"—"Train up a Child"—In his own Opinion his best Work—Decline of his Painting—His Vehicles and Modes of Execution—Great Powers as a Draftsman—Finished Studies from the living Model—Their rare Excellence and Beauty—His last Days and sudden Death.

We resume the narrative of Mulready's art from the completion of his student career. It would be a matter of great interest, when we consider the art of his latter years, if we could trace, subject by subject, the works which young Mulready was obliged to undertake to enable him to live, and to support the family which began so early to rise around him; but to this at present we have no clue, and must rest content with his own assertion that his labours were of the most varied nature. As far as we can trace him by the works he exhibited, he first came before the world as a landscape painter, and for some time exhibited such works rather

than subject pictures. We find his name in the Royal Academy Catalogue for the first time in 1804, appended to three landscapes; careful, precise, and imitative works, as far as we can judge of them by the "Crypt in Kirkstall Abbey," in the possession of Mr. Cope, R.A. In 1805 he again exhibited three landscapes; and in 1806, four. But in this year there was a great change in the execution of his pictures: the careful, precise, and rather minute execution of his former works was changed for one somewhat larger and broader, but approaching mannerism in the use of the browns, and the mode of painting into a brown key. It is evident that he was not satisfied with this new manner—no doubt adopted from some of the more advanced painters of the day—as he soon reverted to his own elaborate mode of viewing Nature, and with slight modifications persevered to the end in this treatment of his art.

In 1807, together with one or two landscapes, Mulready exhibited his first subject picture, "Old Kaspar," from Southey's poem of *The Battle of Blenheim*. It is a small work (about 10½ inches square) on panel, and has an interest from being his first figure picture, rather than from any intrinsic excellence as a work of art. It is solidly and crisply painted, with the evident want of knowledge of a beginner, but showing that the painter had looked to his Dutch predecessors. It has stood well, and is still fresh, although it has failed a little in the darks. The composition, light and dark, and even the colour, have been well considered; but there is a great want of truth and knowledge of the constructive details in the parts of the cottage shown in the background: a want soon overcome by the painter's great

perceptive imitation. There is a foreshadowing of his future finish in the hair and beard of the old man.

In 1808, Mulready was again a contributor to the exhibition of the Royal Academy, both of landscapes and figure pictures; and one of these, "The Rattle," now the property of Mr. Joseph Gillott, shows the rapid advance of the painter. He had evidently made great preparations for this picture, small as it is, and with characteristic perseverance had finished, the previous year, a careful study for it, now in the Sheepshanks' Collection, and many minutely finished studies of groups of still life, pots and pans, &c., such as those belonging to Wilson Lowry, to Mr. Mac Connel, and Mr. Ansdell, A.R.A., painted in or before 1807. By these means he had achieved perfect power of execution and great mastery over his materials. "The Rattle" is painted very much in the manner of Teniers, except that the background is more solid. It is executed with a flat crisp touch, very little glazing or scumbling, and no appearance of the stippled manner of his latter years, but a dexterous onceness, such as the Dutch master was so well skilled in. The scheme of light and dark is like Teniers, and all the colour is focussed to a single object in the foreground. The spectator sees through the back part of the picture into an outer loft with a step-ladder, and the keeping and grey rendering of this part of the picture is excellent: though a small work, it ranks him at once as an artist.

But at the time this was exhibiting Mulready had a work of yet more importance on his easel, perhaps far advanced; as, instead of waiting for the opening of the Academy exhibition in 1809, he sent this, his

first large picture, to the British Institution: induced to do so, most probably, by the prizes offered by the directors on this occasion. We find allusion to them in Wilkie's diary of the 8th July, 1809. "I heard to-day," he says, "that at the Institution the prizes were awarded as follows: Dow, for an historical picture; Sharpe, for a domestic subject; and *Master* Linnell, for landscape." And in another entry on the 17th he tells us that "Sir George Beaumont called. He said he had been at the Institution, and liked Mulready's picture better than he did Sharpe's." Referring to the catalogues of this date we find the historical painter was George Dawe, afterwards a member of the Academy, his subject "Imogen found at the Cave of Bellarius;" while that of M. W. Sharpe was "The Music Master;" the prizes each fifty guineas. Such a sum would at that time have been a great boon to Mulready; and there is little doubt that the verdict in our day would be with Sir George Beaumont in favour of Mulready. We believe that the Sharpe here mentioned is the painter of "The Bee's Wing" and "The Last Pinch," which as engravings were very popular about thirty-five years ago.

This picture of Mulready's that Sir George Beaumont did like, while the directors of the Institution preferred one by Sharpe, is "The Carpenter's Shop and Kitchen," and is the painter's first important figure picture. The story told is very simple. The wife of the workman, neither pretty nor young, sits beside the fire in the living room; her little son is asleep on her lap, and the father has come from his work-bench to have a loving look at his youngest child; on the other side of the fireplace is an older boy, with his back to the spectator.

These constitute the material of the picture, which is a little history of a workman's life, true from its very homeliness, and touching, because without any false sentiment. It has been tritely said that one half the world does not know how the other half lives; here, at least, the upper ten thousand may look upon the every-day life of the lower ten million, under, perhaps, its best aspect. Here is the carpenter, both as he works and as he lives; the wife, with her baby and its bed; the little fire, with its humble cookery; the one table, with its preparation for the mid-day meal; the unmatched knives and forks, the salt-cellar, and the single spoon; in the chimney-corner the flat-iron, the little store of fuel, and the husband's solace in his leisure hours, his treasury of pipes. The boy has the bellows beside him —that poor man's instrument, for fuel must be carefully husbanded, and the fire, usually a mere handful, easily quickened for hurried use. All the accessories are of the simplest and rudest: on the mantel-shelf the appliances for tea, the tinder-box (now a thing of the past), the single candle swealed down as the housewife ran about with it in her household labours; the bread-grater, and a few half emptied medicine bottles, probably containing Daffy's elixir or Godfrey's cordial for the child. Beside the table is a tub, and some half-prepared vegetables ready for cooking; the child's dinner is in a pipkin on the hearth. The painter's own life at this time was no doubt full of suggestions as to hardships and makeshifts, and of living on the smallest means and with the fewest appliances for domestic comfort. In the background, not parted from the living room, is the carpenter's work-shop; his bench (for which there was more than one

careful sketch among the drawings), the jack-plane, the oil-stone, the ripping and mortice chisels, mallet and hammers, all are there, and in a small cage the bird, that universal solace of the workshop. In the mid-distance is the rude step-ladder that leads to the sleeping-loft. Small materials for a picture you will say, since beauty there is none, expression none, or next to none, nor is there much room for character; story there is none beyond the quiet appeal of every-day life; yet it is a picture that gives great pleasure to the spectator.

In this picture the system and principles of the Dutch masters Jan Steen and Teniers are seen to have been well studied and clearly understood. How well has the painter appreciated their principle of giving great breadth to the light, and accumulating it round his principal group. Also that of spreading his warm colour, his reds by yellows into light, as in the red dress of the female, and the yellow frock of the sleeping child; while the cooler light of the fire-place expands and enlarges that of the group; the red also is sedulously carried round the picture by all the little art devices of the masters whose works our painter had so far built upon, and knew so well how to use, and how to conceal the use. The execution of the picture, still of the same character as "The Rattle," is sincere and masterly, painted at once, and with a degree of easy freedom, and great completion in the accessories; which indeed are carried further than the figures in point of finish, and speak the future art of the painter: thus the texture of the coarse shawl of the woman, the cradle, the old worsted stockings turned into sleeves for the working waistcoat of the carpenter, are wrought like miniature painting, while they have also the higher

finish of keeping. The picture in its present state looks a little spotty, as the darks have somewhat lost their richness; but when painted it must have been thought a striking picture for a young man of twenty-two.

We have already said that Mulready was stimulated by the success of Wilkie, and there can be little question that such was the case. It is true, no doubt, that they had both studied the same masters, but beyond what would arise from this cause, there is a great similarity in their early pictures. Nor is it to be wondered at. Wilkie had already made a very successful appeal to the public, and had exhibited, among other pictures, his "Blind Fiddler," his "Card Players," and his "Rent Day." Mulready's "Carpenter's Shop" was an attempt to cope with the popular favourite, and as far as it went, a very successful attempt; but as yet he had not sought to give character, expression, or even much action, all of which are to be found in the above-named pictures of his rival.

We may very well suppose that Wilkie's friends, one of whom does not hesitate to call him "a consummate dramatist—the only one who had appeared since the days of Hogarth," had not failed to make these objections against Mulready, for we find him in his next pictures making an effort to show that he was quite capable of achieving these qualities also. In 1811, he produced his picture of the "Barber's Shop," in which the execution is perhaps less refined than the "Carpenter's Shop," while it has less apparent finish with far more of local truth; but the great advance is in character, and expression. A grandmother has brought a loutish boy to the village barber, to have his redundant

red locks clipt and reduced to order. The lad is seated in the centre of the picture, a perfect study of character in body and limb, his legs dangling, the toes kissing each other, the heels wide apart, the hands clasped between his thighs, the head down, and brows and eyes quite hidden by the matted and ropy tangle of hair. The barber, who is just combing a single lock to its full length, is a truly characteristic individual, one who could be nothing but a barber, and as such, holds to the dignity of his craft; he wears a linen coat, and his wig—poverty-stricken it is true, and like its master, somewhat the worse for wear—is carefully dressed and adjusted to the head with a nicety that seeks to defy scrutiny, and to pass it off as the natural hair of the wearer. The grandam herself stands looking at her red-headed lout, with silent, self-satisfied complacency, as if he were a real cherub; her hands are crossed on her bosom with admiration, in one she holds her spectacles, in the other the boy's hat. Another boy with his back to the spectator, hangs at the pocket-hole of her dark-spotted cotton dress. At the fire-place are two men, the one reading the newspaper, the other eagerly peering over his shoulder; a bill on the wall beside them, "To the Electors of Middlesex," shows them to be politicians rather than gossips. In the foreground, a black cat with her kittens spits at an intrusive dog, and serves as the strongest point of dark. A lad in the background on the left waits his turn for the barber's craft.

The "hair-cutting saloon" is formed merely by hanging a coarse and tattered baize on a line; the stock-in-trade is of the simplest and rudest kind: two brushes well worn, and with but few tufts of bristles left, and

looking far more like scrubbing-brushes than hair-brushes, a pair of razors, a strop, a soap-dish on the chimney-shelf and a powder puff, one wash-ball, part of a former stock in trade in a cracked upright glass jar, and a tin shaving-pot: all these have given the painter an opportunity of luxuriating in painting details; while on the irregular stone floor is a barrel for a seat, and a rude rickety form on which the boy sits to submit his tanned pole to the man of skill, who enters upon the mystery of his craft as if it were the one duty of life. The principal light is thrown on the crisply painted white cloth around the lad's neck. The head and hands are solidly painted, but with less laborious finish than in his former pictures. The reds are skilfully carried through the picture and focussed on the cap of the child standing beside the woman; a bright red seal on the strop, the collar of the man reading, the jar on the mantel-shelf, and the red tiles on the stone floor, serve to carry the colour round the picture. The blue handkerchief on the neck of the grandam contrasts cold with the hot colour of her tippet. The material is repeated from other pictures; the tub, jars, &c. have done other duty, but they are wonderfully executed, and as compared with the accessories in Wilkie's pictures of the same date are certainly better painted. The curious studies for the barber's head and hands among the drawings in the Sheepshanks Collection, and the studies shown at South Kensington after the painter's death, teach us how carefully he thought out his works.

During this period the painter must have had a hard struggle to live. His family was increasing (all his four sons were born before Mulready was twenty-four years of

age), and there were times when—the country at that time being engaged in a long and costly war—the necessaries of life were at famine prices; while the purchasers of pictures were few in number, and the prices obtained insignificant as compared with those of our day. It must have been about this period that the painter assisted Sir Robert Ker Porter in getting up his panorama of Seringapatam, and occasionally painted on the scenery of the Lyceum, then under the management of Arnold. He also found purchasers for his landscapes. In one of the two of this date, taken from the neighbourhood to which he had now removed—the Mall at Kensington Gravel Pits—the house in which he resided is seen. They were painted as a commission, through the kind influence of Callcott, R.A.; but when finished, did not meet his approval, and were thrown on the painter's hands, where they remained until purchased by Mr. Sheepshanks, of whose collection they now form a part. No doubt Mulready also taught at this time, as in later days; and from all these sources he managed to make a sufficient income to support his rising family.

It is not our intention to give a description of the many fine works of this great painter, but simply to describe his progress in art; and perhaps it may be as well, before proceeding further, to advert to his power as a landscape painter, the direct practice of which art he almost concluded at this period. In landscape, as in figure subjects, he would no doubt have attained to the first rank had he continued to practise it; but after the picture of "Boys Fishing," the property of Miss Swinburne, painted in 1813, we have no pure

landscapes by him for nearly forty years, till in 1852, he painted the "Blackheath Park," being the view from the front gate of the house in which Mr. Sheepshanks then resided.

Though he would no doubt have achieved excellence as a landscape painter, he would perhaps have been rather imitative than inventive. The "Boys Fishing," the background of the "Punch," and of "The Fight Interrupted," show his best early manner: broad, flat, somewhat empty, and wanting that vigour and boldness we find in the early pictures of John Chalon and of Callcott; as for instance, the work by the latter, presented to the Royal Academy on his election, which is very vigorous, and totally unlike the manner he fell into after his Italian journey. Mulready's works at this time are very highly finished, but all the finish is thoroughly subservient to breadth and general effect. No one looking at the picture of "The Mall" (No. 36, Sheepshanks Collection), or "The Old Houses at Lambeth"—the property of Mr. Hope—would believe, without close examination, the amount of earnest labour they contain, so completely is it subordinate to the work as a whole. Callcott used to say:—"Finish as much as you please, if you can keep the parts of your picture in their right place." And Mulready, who was his neighbour, and no doubt had often heard this doctrine laid down, had felt its truth, and duly attended to it. In his latter days Mulready changed his views somewhat, and the finish in his landscapes is rather too apparent. A painter whose feeling for landscape art is that of complete subordination of everything to local truth of colour, used to call the minute finish of the "Blackheath Park," *pin-*

fiddling; and certainly if the best art is that in which one never thinks of the labour bestowed, there is too much appearance of it in that work. But Mulready shows, perhaps, to most advantage in that which is to the painter so great a difficulty—the treatment of landscape backgrounds; as the figures must be principal, to give truth of imitative detail and precision of form under such circumstances, and to have the parts in true relative keeping, requires the power of the skilled artist. But in his backgrounds Mulready has shown himself greater even than in his pure landscapes: most of the backgrounds in his later works are painted from drawings or from memory, which in him was very clear and strong. But as we shall have to speak of some of them in relation to the figure subjects, we may revert to the further consideration of his subject pictures.

Passing over his "Punch," we come to the "Idle Boys" and the "Fight Interrupted," produced in an important year of the painter's life. The first of these pictures, which from the greater facility of the execution might be thought the later of the two works, were it not for the order in which they were exhibited, was sent to the Royal Academy in 1815, and was no doubt the cause of his being chosen an associate at the election which took place in November. It is a perfect work for arrangement, strong action, expression, and suitable colour. The schoolmaster seated at his desk, to which he has summoned the two offenders, has a very characteristic head, (it is from the painter's father); his face is red and angry, his appearance that of one who would rule by fear rather than by love, and he has just administered a tingling blow on the palm to one of the

urchins who has been detected playing in school hours: he seems to be snarling out, "This is the way you do your sums," as he points with his ruler to the game of tit-tat-toe on the boy's slate, and to take a keen delight in the punishment he is administering. True and natural also is the action of the culprit, that of smart and suffering; not in the face alone but in the writhing action of the head, the two hands squeezed in one another and pressed between the thighs, one leg drawn up and the foot twisted beneath the knee of the other leg on which the lad is standing; while his companion, his throat swollen and his heart in his mouth, waits for his turn which will speedily follow. There is a slight change in the execution of this picture; in some places the ground is seen through a semi-solid painting, as in the coat of the boy who waits for punishment, the master's desk, and in parts of the background; true glazings also are adopted, as in the master's cap, the green breeches of the beaten boy, and the green back of the master's chair. "The Fight Interrupted" was in a forward state at the time of Mulready's election to the associateship: it was ready to exhibit in 1816 as a justification of the Academy's choice. But higher honours awaited him: the members, alive to the talent of the young painter, selected him for the full membership of the Academy in the February following his election as associate; a course of which there is no subsequent instance.

It was fortunate that he was ready with the most perfect picture in his first manner, to justify to the public the wisdom of the choice. In "The Fight Interrupted," the story is well and simply told; the big bully of the school soundly thrashed by one of the lesser boys, over

whom he had endeavoured to tyrannize, is but too glad of the opportune arrival of the Dominie: this great coward leans in a flaccid and exhausted attitude against the school pump, and is piteously regarding the marks on his fingers from his cut lips; it is evident he has had enough of it, whilst the little lion, whom the master has taken by the ear, is red with anger and with the blows of his big opponent, but his clenched fist and teeth firmly set show that he is ready to renew the contest. Mulready's children were by this time grown into boys and did their part in standing as models for this fine work.

The execution and handling are the same as in his earlier pictures; it is true there are some indications of glazing, but it is used to enhance and enrich colour rather than to produce it. The red cap of the boy addressing the master is the only instance of colour produced direct from the white ground, as in his later pictures; but this bit of painting was renewed in 1861, when Mulready had the picture in order to restore one or two injuries it had received before it came into Mr. Sheepshanks' possession. There is, nevertheless, a little change in manner from the "Barber's Shop" and "Punch;" the execution is rather more facile, and the light ground shews through the semi-solid once-painting of parts of the picture, as in the brown coat of the bigger boy speaking to the master, and the trowsers of the beaten bully. But his election had established Mulready's confidence in himself and his own powers, and he was no longer inclined to emulate Wilkie, nor even to take his art from the Dutch School; he had seen works of higher quality, and from this time we

begin to trace a change towards a manner far more peculiarly his own; gradual at first but afterwards more strongly marked.

It is unnecessary to follow Mulready year by year, and picture by picture; we rather propose to show the changes that took place in his art as he advanced in life and increased in knowledge. Beginning, as we have said, with the methods of the Dutch School and emulating the art of his companion Wilkie, he gradually obtained complete mastery of this manner and continued the practice of painting at once, up to 1822: "The Village Buffoon," "The Dog of Two Minds," "The Wolf and the Lamb," "The Careless Messenger," with other works, being painted in this manner. In the above year he painted "The Convalescent from Waterloo," in which there are traces of a slight change and a tendency to a higher class of subjects. The colouring is much thinner and less solid than heretofore, the ground more used throughout; the whole of the landscape shows through the very thin semi-solid painting; the outline, never seen in his earlier works, but characteristic of his later time, begins to be seen through the thin painting, as in the figures in the distance, the hair of the young wrestler, &c. The landscape more particularly has been painted into a fluent glaze (probably copal), and has flowed into it; it is hard and firm and uncracked, the whites remaining fresh and clear without horniness. Glazing has been still more resorted to in the principal figures, and we even see pure colour (unmixed with white) from the light ground, as in the lining of the woman's gown, while in the whole picture the Dutch scheme of colour has been modified for a

fresher and more brilliant scale. The sense of daylight is beautifully rendered, and although the scene is a flat level, is in perfect keeping. The face of the convalescent soldier is excellently treated for expression, the lassitude of sickness struggling with the pleasure of seeing the energetic courage of the younger boy in the wrestling bout. There are curious faults of drawing in the picture, but it is a work of rare excellence.

Between this period and 1832 the painter seemed to be feeling his way to a new mode of execution. Hitherto he had painted at once and from the object; now he began to work from drawings and studies. Although the change resulted in a number of pictures of a character wholly different from any others in the English school, it did not at first appear for the better. Of the transition time there are three illustrative works: "The Travelling Druggist," "The Origin of a Painter," and "Firing the Cannon." In these the crispness of al-primo painting is almost gone, and a degree of woolliness throughout has resulted from the mode of execution. The colour is obtained by glazing over a prepared ground, as in the robe of the rhubarb merchant, the leaves of the vine over the door, or the yellow shawl in which the sick boy is wrapped. Some process has been used to give texture to the prepared ground, either by stabbing, pressing cloth on the wet layer of paint, or some such means. On this the design seems made out in brown; Mulready's son Michael said bone-brown was used, and that himself and his brother burned the bones to make it: the brown ground in all the three pictures predominates too much. The ground in the "Drūggist" is very thin, and has gathered up into small pin-holes; and in the "Origin of

a Painter," into sharp, wiry cracks. This failure may be noticed in the other works, and seems to result from the vehicle used, since the "Druggist" has failed also in the solid painting; as in the breeches of the sick boy, and the dress of the mother. The use of bone-brown to lay in the chiaroscuro of the picture, is one of the features of his new mode of working. The weakness arising from painting from drawings is most evident in the girl with the skipping-rope, in the sick boy, the dog, and the foliage over the door. These have a certain roundness of form in touch and texture, entirely different from the crisp precision of the "Fight Interrupted;" even the stone steps up to the door have somewhat of a woolly texture. All this is very much exaggerated in "The Origin of a Painter," and the picture has a faded look, as if the colour had passed away and left the brown ground: the whole appears dried up and starved, and the figures very poor and weak; the head of the young woman wants individuality, and is of a common class of idealization. In the "Cannon," Mulready has partly overcome the difficulties of the new treatment; the browns are fuller and richer, and the semi-solid flesh and draperies more powerful; the full force of crimson lake from the white ground is given in the bonnet of the young girl, and the tassel of the boy firing the cannon: the inner effect of the room in half-shadow is good, and is luminous without rottenness. Still, however, this is the weakest period of Mulready's art: a period of transition to a better, which the painter had as yet not achieved.

In 1828, Mulready exhibited the picture of "The Interior of an English Cottage," in which he seems to

have completely overcome the difficulties of the new methods he had adopted. He had obtained a perfect vehicle and durable pigments; the textural preparation of the ground has been laid aside and a semi-solid execution direct from the white ground substituted. This picture deserves great study: the treatment of the interior is wonderfully luminous, and the look-out from the window into the open beyond is very true to the effect of light; the cottage is full of material, all adequately finished without over apparent labour, all truly in keeping and properly subordinate to its position in the picture and the general effect. The whole interior is of a rich luminous brown; the various objects—the cradle, child, ducks, hare, jars, pots, pans, &c.—are just sufficiently tinged with their local colour to give them individual truth. Out of the window the sun is seen setting in a bed of ruddy clouds, the red of the sunset being the focussing red of the picture; yet thoroughly keeping its place in the distance, and led up to in the composition by the warm tones of the jar standing in the glow of the hidden fire on the cottage hearth. The light in the distance is very low in tone, yet it looks brilliant; the greatest dark, clearing up all the darks in the picture, is that of the black cat in the foreground: the scale of light and dark, from the sky to the black of the cat, is very much diminished by this lowness of tone, but there is no light at all approaching that of the sky in brightness, no dark equal to the cat in intensity. This is one of the few pictures of sentiment Mulready has painted, and the feeling is poetically tender. The day is dying calmly out, the sunset glow pervades the room; in the cradle is a sleeping child, an older girl has fallen asleep

on the knees of the mother, who sits quietly watching the good man's return. The fire is low, the supper prepared for the husband's return is on the hearthstone, the slippers airing by the blaze, the solemn quiet of eventide unbroken save by the ticking of the clock and the purring of the cat. The expectant husband is seen in the far distance waving his hat to the watching housewife. This period of Mulready's art culminates in "The Last In," in which most of the beauties, and some of the faults of this middle manner may be traced. The chief of the figures are painted from drawings, and not direct from nature.

Though so successful in his in-door scenes, Mulready had not yet arrived at certainty in his new method, as respects exteriors. Thus, the first picture of "The Sailing Match" (1831) seems wholly worked from drawings; the flesh has none of the freshness of his earlier works, and the picture, although out of doors, wants air. A great improvement in these respects is discernible in the small repetition of 1833: it is more fresh in colour; has more finish and completeness, with less of woolliness, less of a certain staring, tinted appearance observable in the larger work: in which, strange to say, colour of a wrong quality is introduced, as in the trees of the background and the dark green meadow behind the foot-bridge, where the colour is rank and the brown uniting key wholly lost. Indeed, it was not until he painted "The Sonnet" and "Train up a Child" that he arrived at the full power of subordinating his landscape to the colour and chiaroscuro of his pictures in this his second method.

"The Seven Ages," which shortly followed, is the

picture of the greatest pretension that the painter undertook; but it can hardly be called a success, nor does it form a mark in his practice: nevertheless, being incomplete, it is a picture that reveals some of his methods. All the work seems carried out from drawings, or completed without referring direct to Nature; but this procedure is more concealed than in his former works. The colour is produced by transparent painting over a slightly prepared ground, on which the lights are heightened and rendered with impasto; or by painting solidly a pale version of the colour sought, and then glazing it into richness. The mode is best seen on the left of the picture (the spectator's right), where the work is not carried so far as on the right. Thus the hose of the lover have been laid in of a reddish hue, then delicately glazed, and some of the colour wiped off, leaving it in the texture of the painting, and afterwards the folds enriched by the same means. The buildings on the left, the cap of the bowing pantaloon, and the ground on that side of the picture are evidently unfinished; while the justice, the flitting peasants, the buildings, and landscape on the other side of the picture, are perhaps carried up to the tone and strength to which Mulready would have wrought the whole had he taken up the picture again. This he much wished to do after the picture left Mr. Sheepshanks' possession, but time and opportunity never served. The pictures of "Bob Cherry" and "The Sonnet," which followed, are painted on a white ground so thinly that in many places the pencil lines by which the parts are drawn-in show through the painting. Mulready had now arrived at the perfection of his second manner. The works completed

by him between 1839 and 1848 are the most complete in story, colour and execution of any of his productions. "The Artist's Studio," "First Love," a true rustic idyll, "Crossing the Ford," "Train up a Child," "The Whistonian Controversy," "Choosing the Wedding Gown," and "The Butt," have qualities of execution not to be found in any other works of the English School; to which must be added great perception of character, as in "The Whistonian Controversy" and "The Butt;" with greater simplicity of action than in his earlier works, and far more refinement of treatment.

In the pictures just named, Mulready's art culminated; the chiaroscuro is excellent, the colour rich and jewel-like, the execution refined and perfect of its kind. "The Whistonian Controversy" is somewhat hot, but it is most agreeable as a whole, full and harmonious, and the furthest possible removed from paintiness. An autumnal hue seems to pervade the picture, suitable to the ease-loving age of the disputants; while "Choosing the Wedding Gown" is fresher and more spring-like in colour, agreeing with the opening life of the young vicar and his fair and notable wife. In this picture the full force of the palette is given—the brightest vermilion, the richest green, the purest ultramarine; yet all are thoroughly harmonized. Some of the colours are obtained by rich glazings; some by painting the semi-solid pigment directly over the pure white ground of the panel; and the Venetian methods have been better understood than by any painter of our school. The discrimination of the textures, also, as seen in these two pictures, is well worthy careful study. The parchment books and table-cover in the first, the rich stuffs at the foot of the

tradesman's counter in the second; while the end of the counter itself, is curious, and shows that it is an imitation of imitative mahogany: what a nice distinction to achieve in its pictorial reproduction! But the picture by which the painter himself considered he had arrived at the greatest excellence is the "Train up a Child," painted in 1841, just before "The Whistonian Controversy." It was, some years later, injured by fire at Mr. Baring's, and came into Mulready's hands in an apparently hopeless state; patiently and thoroughly he repaired the injuries, and then set himself to add all that his increased experience suggested for its improvement. The two females and the child were carried further in beauty and expression, the dog was completed, the noble avenue of trees, before only suggested, now completed in drawing, the landscape greatly enriched and increased in tone, the colour of the Lascars greatly enhanced, and the whole brought into a fuller harmony. Altogether, this is now certainly one of his best works; although the subject is obscure, and the Lascars somewhat theatrical in action and grouping.

"The Butt," apart from its subject, is equal to any of the painter's works, but it was largely completed long before this period; setting it aside, therefore, it will be seen that after 1846, Mulready's art increased in finish, but declined in power. "The Haymakers" looks smooth and like china painting; "The Bathers," beautifully drawn, is somewhat like the art of Vanderwerf. "The Mother and Child," his last completed work, is timid and inclined to prettiness; and his "Toy-seller," left unfinished at his death, is an evidence of labour wrongly applied.

Mulready painted dogs well, and introduced them into many of his pictures, and always most characteristically. Thus, the brindled mastiff in "The Butt"—a true butcher's dog; the little pet spaniel in "The Wedding Gown," the old disabled hound in "The Seven Ages," and the sneaking cur in "The Dog of Two Minds;" so varied are these animals that an illustrative series might almost be formed from his pictures.

It would be very desirable to have a thorough record of Mulready's vehicles, and his methods of using them in the production of his pictures. Having early become convinced of the danger of using asphaltum, he wholly abandoned it after 1816; he also gave up the use of mastic magylph, and, latterly, painted with copal, and was extremely careful that one painting should be dry before another was placed over it. He was very minute in his execution, using a powerful glass to look at his work. His palette was of the smallest dimensions, and often contained only the one or two colours or tints of the drapery on which he was working. In his early pictures he used the colour freely, and with a broad, flat manner of handling; but in his later works he inclined more to stippling, although he managed to hide the method when the work was complete. As he made ample notes of his processes, it may be presumed that accurate particulars will be obtainable hereafter.

We must not overlook his remarkable powers as a draughtsman. This is evidenced in his early studies for his pictures, his sketches for backgrounds, and details of birds, plants, foliage, &c.; but latterly he gave great attention to drawing the figure, and developed a remarkable style. It has already been said that

Mulready made careful cartoons, finished in black and red chalk, for some of his works. Among the earliest is that for "The Last In," (1835); for "The Sonnet," the property of F. Miller, Esq., of Preston, (1839), and about the same date for "The Artist's Studio," the property of Major Burchell, of Ribblesdale. The beautiful drawing for "The Wedding Gown," (1844), the property of T. Baring, Esq., and that for the "Mother and Child," may also be noted. These drawings led the painter to the use of the same means in working from the living model, and resulted in a series of studies made after 1846, which for truthful drawing, modelling of the forms, and beauty and refinement of execution, may well rank with the greatest works of the kind by the greatest masters. It was the painter's view that all the characteristics of the model chosen should be strictly attended to, and that it was no part of the student's business in drawing from the nude, to mould it to some preconceived idea, to the proportions or idealization of the antique. Yet in religiously following out this plan of study, nature is rarely represented otherwise than beautiful. The proportions of length or thickness may vary greatly; but they serve to characterize the individual, and while we have none of the elegant insipidity of Bartolozzi or Cipriani; neither have we the coarse ugly contours seen in the life-drawings of their contemporaries. West used to say that if you wished to see the faults of your picture, you should set a student to copy it, as he would be sure grossly to exaggerate the worst points of your work; and so it is with a bad draughtsman: in studying from the life he is sure to caricature every defect of the figure before him.

Mulready, while he preserved all the individuality of the forms, kept them truly subordinate to the character of the whole. The mere execution of these drawings is of the rarest beauty; the paper chosen is a delicate straw-colour, the drawing is laid in lightly with red chalk, which is then slightly rubbed, and the lights taken out with bread, the shadows and grey half-tints being added with the black chalk. So subtilly are these simple means used, that the most beautiful appearance of flesh colour is often given; in some cases finer even than in his paintings with the varied pigments of the palette at his command.

Mulready was ever a willing and diligent visitor in the life school, and, like Etty, was always a worker there. The earnest and careful study which these drawings evidence, many of them made before the eyes of the students, should lay the foundation for better drawing in the British school. During the painter's life-time the Department of Science and Art purchased several of the best of his life-studies, for the use of the schools of art throughout the land, and both the Royal Academy and the Department were purchasers at the sale after his death. The sight of such earnest works ought to be extremely useful, and it is to be hoped that students will not merely copy the manner, but be led to imitate the deep study by which such excellence was achieved.

All the painter's last years were passed at Kensington, first in the Mall, and afterwards at No. 1. Linden Grove, Bayswater, which he moved into when these buildings were erected in 1827 by Mr. Allison, who built a painting-room according to Mulready's plans and directions. Here he resided until his death in 1863.

Among the drawings sold by his executors, is a set of curious pen and ink sketches, showing the disposition of the rooms, the arrangement of the furniture and pictures, the plan of the gardens, the very trees and shrubs that were to be planted in it. He had no doubt pictured to himself the little comforts, conveniences and elegancies, that he would gather around him in his new abode. His means were now assured, his family grown up, his fame won, his course of life fixed. Alas! how hope is still in the future: the painter had no doubt planned a course for his children, but he left them to grow up almost without restraint, and they caused him endless vexations; he planted his garden also with choice trees and rare shrubs and then left it to its own wild and tangled luxuriance; his ideal of a painter's house was left incomplete. Yet he continued to reside here for the remainder of his days, rarely leaving home except for a short visit to Capheaton or Blackheath; but his little plans were never realized: his house remained bare of furniture, and in it he led a sort of half-hermit life, latterly with his son Michael, who tended him to the last, was with him when he died, and was no doubt the chief depository of all his views and wishes.

But if his life was a solitary one, and a life of labour, he had at least the happiness of working at his beloved art to the very last; and may, to the very last, have been said to have extended some section of art-practice. Thus his wonderful life-studies were almost entirely the work of the last ten or twelve years. When above seventy-five years of age, he set himself to practise drawing hands and heads rapidly in pen and ink, at the little life-school held by the painters of the neighbourhood at

Kensington. "I had lost somewhat of my power in that way," said he, "but I have quite got it up again: it won't do to let these things go." He was constantly speaking of the works he purposed commencing, and said that now he was prepared for what he had long looked forward to, and for what he seemed almost to think his former pictures only preparatory—painting works of life size. Large canvases were in his rooms, and during the last two or three years of his life he laboured diligently on his large repetition of the "Toy Seller:" laboured, it may be truly said, for his art was not fitted for works of the life size; as this picture most clearly shows, both in its execution and in the wonderful studies he prepared for it.

He died with his mind clear, and his faculties unimpaired; perfectly aware of the insidious disease to which he was subject, he yet hoped to fight off its attacks by his resolute will, and did not consider his end so near. The week before he died he attended a committee meeting of the Royal Academy, and took an active part in some animating discussions; we accompanied him on his way home, and in crossing Waterloo place, Mulready had one of his spasmodic attacks; seizing our arm, he remained motionless in the middle of the road for about two minutes, regardless of the vehicles that thronged by. After a period of apparently absolute powerlessness, he exclaimed—"It is all over now; I know well when I have conquered it: 'tis all right, I shall have no more;" and when we reached the corner where our roads diverged, he was deaf to our request to allow us to see him home. That night week he was again at the committee, apparently well—at least

without pain. Again we proposed to walk away together, but he remarked that Hardwicke was such an invalid, that he thought it right to convoy him on his way, and they left together. This was at eleven o'clock at night; at seven the next morning, the 7th July, 1863, Mulready was at rest.

CHAPTER IX.

LESLIE, NEWTON, AND EGG.

Charles Robert Leslie, R.A.—Finishes his pupil Life—First attempts high Art—Visits Paris and Brussels and Antwerp—True Bent of his Genius—Paints "Slender and Anne Page"—Influenced by his Friend Washington Irving—"Sir Roger de Coverley going to Church"—Establishes his Reputation—"The Gipsies"—"May Day in the Time of Queen Elizabeth"—"Sancho Panza and the Duchess"—Great Success of this Picture—His Marriage—Elected Associate of the Academy—Paints Don Quixote in the Sierra Morena—His Landscapes unsuccessful—Home Life and Friendships—Joins the Sketching Society—The "Dinner at Page's House"—Comparison of the original and the replica Pictures—Different Influences under which they were painted—Accepts the Office of Teacher in the Military School of the United States—Resigns and returns to London—Resumes his Art—Influence of Constable, R.A.—Paints "The Queen's Coronation"—And "The Christening of the Princess Royal"—Family Influences on his Pictures—"The Mother and Child"—"Playing at Horses"—The Grosvenor Portraits—His failing Health and Death—His gentle Character—Genius—Art full of Grace and Beauty—His Females inimitable—His Treatment of Costume—*Gilbert Stuart Newton, R.A.*—United in Art and Friendship with Leslie—His Birth and early Training—Comes to Europe—Visits Italy, France, and the Netherlands—Settles in London—An irregular Student—His first Pictures—"The Forsaken"—"Lovers' Quarrels"—"The Importunate Author"—His Portraits—Elected Associate of the Academy—Paints "The Vicar of Wakefield reconciling his Wife to Olivia"—The Picture described and criticized—His Spanish Pictures—The "Portia and Bassanio"—Its true Excellence—Becomes Insane and dies—His Art—And Character—*Augustus Leopold Egg, R.A.*—Birth and Early Progress—Exhibits in Suffolk Street—Elected into the Academy—Illness and Early Death—Characteristics of his Art.

In concluding the early life of our three drama-painters, we left Leslie, a student of the Royal Academy using his best leisure to perfect his art-education; and adding to his means by painting the portraits of his

American friends. The art of his two countrymen, Allston and West, had so impressed him that his first attempts were in the grand style; and even when descending from "Saul and the Witch of Endor," to Shakspeare, he turned to the historic plays rather than the comedies, his subject being "The Death of Rutland." The former of these works the governors of the British Institution, with their usual sagacity, turned out of the gallery; the latter, after exhibition at the Royal Academy, where Leslie tells us it had an "excellent situation," was purchased for the city of Philadelphia, his American home. In 1817 he paid a visit of two months to Paris, Brussels, and Antwerp, making diligent study of the pictures by the old masters; and in 1818 made a journey into the south of England, where he obtained much insight into the characteristics of rural life. As the year advanced he began to find that the true bent of his genius was neither for historic nor religious art, but for humorous comedy; which he treated with beauty and character of a far more refined kind than either of the distinguished painters we have classed with him.

The same year he painted a small picture of "Slender and Anne Page," from the *Merry Wives of Windsor;* a comedy which afterwards afforded subjects for some of his finest works. At this time of his life he was not only on intimate terms with Washington Irving, but was engaged in illustrating his "Sketch Book," and it is more than probable that Irving, whose predilection for the papers of Addison is so evident, may have turned his young friend's attention to the subject of his next picture; a subject which thoroughly suited his

art and his feelings, and which, when finished and exhibited, at once established his reputation.

He tells us that on his return from Devonshire in 1818, he painted for his friend Mr. Dunlop, (to whose then residence in Dawlish his visit had been made,) the picture of "Sir Roger de Coverley going to Church accompanied by the Spectator," which was very popular in the exhibition of 1819. That Irving suggested the subject is seen to be more likely since we find him in 1821 writing to suggest others. "What do you intend to paint for the exhibition? Have you done anything to Sir Roger? . . . Do you think of the Shakspeare subject?—one of these ought to be your choice in preference to the 'Heiress,'" a subject of the painter's own choosing. Leslie had evidently hit the right vein and found a lode as yet unworked. Wilkie had monopolized the games and merrymaking of the lower classes, and Mulready was as yet in the same path. Leslie took up genteel comedy. It was perhaps fortunate that Allston had left for America, and West, at a very advanced age, had almost retired from art; thus leaving Leslie uninfluenced and at liberty to follow the true bent of his genius, and to develope those scenes of domestic life in which he afterwards excelled, and peopled with forms of beauty and excellence combined with delicate humour and character. Gracefully has Addison treated this incident of English life, and in a like spirit has Leslie rendered it; perhaps there is no scene so full of episodes of peaceful beauty and kindly feeling as the gathering of a rural population to the service of the village church. Such is the case even now, when the iron rail has so deluged the country with the worn

habitués of great cities; still in the nooks and corners of the land are spots of retired and pastoral peace where old customs linger, and where, on every sabbath morn, the people, clad in the costume of bygone times, may be seen trooping by meadow and by path, over stile and foot-bridge, to the house of God. Its grey walls mantled with ivy, usually crown some low hill or rising ground, its shingle-covered spire glistening and grey against the deep blue sky. Under the yew-tree in the quiet churchyard, the small magnates of the village, the farmer, the blacksmith, and the squire's bailiff, discuss the harvest and the crops, waiting for the "tolling in," and for the squire—the immemorial lord—surrounded with his family, to enter by the little footpath to the chancel door, dispersing valued tokens of recognition to his neighbours, rich and poor, and happy in their manly respect and regard. No doubt Irving and Leslie in their rambles through the land had seen such scenes; and it was a happy thought that led the painter to a kindred subject from one of England's classic authors, and including in the Bachelor Knight one of the most genial creations of his pen. Leslie's kindliness, his sweet nature, general feeling of humour and fine taste, well qualified him for this class of subjects. He was a true gentleman, and therefore could thoroughly enter into and represent scenes in which humour is subordinated and refined in its display, as exhibited by the educated and gentle class.

Leslie was not slow to perceive the impression these subjects had made, and followed up his success by painting in 1820, "Londoners Gipsying," and in 1821, "May Day in the Time of Queen Elizabeth." This

latter was a commission for engraving: he was to be paid 200 guineas for the copyright with the right of selling the picture; a large sum for a young man just rising into notice: when completed it was considered a great success, and won for him his election as associate in the ensuing November. Here then we find him with a well-defined walk in art, and seemingly determined to pursue it in this country; for there is no recurrence to his desire to re-visit America. In 1816 he wrote to his sister, "Nothing has occurred to alter my determination of returning at the time I have fixed;" but now with academic honours, and commissions for future works, his return was set aside, not to be renewed until after many years.

The Arabian story-teller relates an endeavour on the part of a rich man to improve the fortunes of a poor but honest neighbour, by lending him a sum of money to trade with, which ended in the twofold disappointment of the patron; but goes on to tell that what could not be done by forethought was brought about by chance—a happy accident establishing the fortunes of the man whom his good intentions had failed to benefit. The moral of the story is that much of our success in life arises out of apparently fortuitous circumstances: thus it happened to Leslie. Lord Egremont, one of the kindest and best friends of artists, and a true lover of art, had a little grandchild at the point of death, and asked Phillips, R.A., the portrait painter, to go down to his country seat to make a sketch of the dying child. Phillips' engagements, however, prevented him, and he proposed Leslie, who was thus introduced to his lordship. Leslie only reached the seat of the child's father after the little sufferer's death,

but sat up all night making sketches of her really beautiful features. The sketches and the picture he painted from them gave great satisfaction to the owner of Petworth, and resulted, in the first instance, in a commission for a picture, and afterwards, in a friendship that lasted until the death of Lord Egremont.

The picture commissioned was painted and exhibited in 1824, "Sancho Panza in the Apartment of the Duchess," from Don Quixote. Sancho is telling the graceful Duchess, as a great secret, that he considers his master as no better than a madman—"as mad as a March hare"—and is bragging that, knowing well his master's blind side, "whatever crotchets come into his own crown, though without either head or tail, he can yet make them pass on him for Gospel." This picture, full of beauty, elegance and humour, has already been described; it was so great a favourite that Leslie repeated it with variations no less than three times: the replica painted for Mr. Vernon is now in the National Collection at Kensington. Leslie always attributed much of his success to this commission. He was at this time paying his addresses to Miss Harriet Stone, one of six sisters, spoken of from their personal attractions as the six precious stones; and the success of "Sancho Panza" and a further tentative commission from its owner, together with the various demands on his pencil that it called forth, enabled him to terminate his engagement by marriage. He writes to Irving in the ensuing January, "I have (as you know) made the greatest change in life that it is in our power to do, and find myself so much the happier, and I trust the better for it, that I scarcely seem to have lived before. All the evils of matrimony

that I have heard or read of appear to me to be slanders, and all the blessings to be underrated:" the language of the early days of married life it may be said, but as far as our experience of Leslie goes, he felt and said the same to the end.

In February, 1826, Leslie was elected a full member of the Royal Academy, and that season exhibited the picture he had painted for Lord Essex, "Don Quixote in the Sierra Morena, deceived by the Curate Barber and Dorothea," of which there is a small study in the Sheepshanks Collection. It was not equal to "Sancho and the Duchess:" landscape was not an art in which Leslie excelled; indeed those pictures in which a landscape background forms an important part are weaker than others, at least as far as the background is concerned. Thus his "Sir Roger and the Gipsies," his two pictures of "Who Can This Be?" and "Who Can This be From?" "Fairlop Fair," and "Jeannie Deans' Interview with Queen Caroline," are the least agreeable of his works. Yet he was a great observer of Nature, and of natural effects; and his friends will remember with pleasure his constant remarks on light and dark, on colour and reflexion, as he walked beside them. Often has he stopped us in the midst of some artistic colloquy, to look at a changing effect that had struck him; sometimes in the most public thoroughfares—standing shading his eyes with his hand, and looking over his spectacles, he would reason of the cause, wholly regardless of the passers-by. Yet he was not made for a landscape painter, as the two or three small landscapes which he painted sufficiently testify. The little garden scene in the Sheepshanks Collection will show how weak and timid his handling was in

foliage; and even before he was intimate with Constable, his greys were cold, and his greens unnaturally vivid.

Leslie's life passed on smoothly and with few incidents. First one child was added to his household, and then another, greatly to the increase of his pleasures; for he was very fond of his family and very indulgent to the whims and ways of children. He continued a warm friendship for Washington Irving, with whom, now in Spain, he kept up a constant correspondence; and the letters which passed between them evidence their true regard for one another. Among the painters of note, Newton, his countryman, and then Constable were amongst his most intimate acquaintances. In 1828, he joined the Artists' Sketching Society, which widened the circle of his friends, and brought him into constant fellowship with the two Chalons and Stanfield; with all of whom he continued, till parted by death, on terms of kindliest intimacy. It is in this year that, writing to his sister in America, he says, "I have begun a very large picture from *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, containing Falstaff, and most of the characters, to the number of fifteen." This picture he completed and exhibited in 1831. It was painted while his art was influenced by his friendship for Newton, a superior colourist to Leslie; and it was repeated on a smaller scale and with fewer characters, for Mr. Sheepshanks. This was in 1838, after Newton's death, and while Constable was the great crony of the painter, and it affords a good opportunity for comparing the effects of the two influences. The picture of "The Dinner at Page's House," now or lately in the possession of Lady Lawley, is certainly one of his finest works. The execution is broad and easy, the drapery quite free

from the tendency to raggedness observable in some of Leslie's works, and there is an absence of any sense of paint. The character of the various personages introduced is well discriminated. How truly Shakspearian is the befuddled, claret-muddled expression of Bardolf, and the stupid, loutish look of the serving-man, Simple; contrasted with the equally stupid but wholly different silliness of his master. The Mrs. Page and Mrs. Ford in the first picture are not equal to the same characters in the repetition; in which there is much more beauty and sweetness, and a far greater feeling of fun and *engoûment*, restrained however by the good breeding of the two ladies. Falstaff, on the contrary, is better in the first picture than in the repetition: in the latter he has the appearance of being stripped to his shirt-sleeves on a hot day; in the former, quite equal in character, attitude and expression, the costume is beautiful in its happy harmonies of colour, and is really a masterpiece of negative hues—the gray yellow of the waistcoat and trunks, the olive green of the vest with its maroon lining and silver fastenings, the grey boots with the crimsonish silver-tipped tops, are a study; and contrasted as the dress is with the gray hair and beard, the white ruff and the ruddy flesh of the old sinner, it forms a combination which Newton probably suggested, and could hardly have improved. The same may be said of the colour throughout, and it surprises us that Leslie, whose sense of colour was not innate, could have followed out suggestions so happily.

Those who had been accustomed to Leslie's first manner—that in which he painted "The Dinner at Page's House," the "Scene from the Taming of the

Shrew," &c.—felt a change for the worse in the pictures painted under the Constable influence. At the time of the change we had the same feeling; but after-judgment does not entirely confirm this. Thus there is a great sense of daylight and air in the second "Page's Dinner" which we look for in vain in the first: in the second the light throughout is pure, cool, and grey, the outlook through the window very truthful, and there is far more atmosphere than in the earlier work; there is not an inch of hot or foxy colour, the oak panelling of the room has the true gray of old oak upon it, so seldom given, a clammy varnished brown being usually substituted for it. Some figures in the first are left out in the second—Pistol for instance, who is rather forced in character, and has too much of the theatrical make up: a rare fault in Leslie, whose innate sense of delicacy rather led him to refine than exaggerate characteristics. This has prevented him giving much of the libidinous side of Falstaff's character. In the Sheepshanks repetition this is admirably illustrated in the females, and shows an improvement upon the first in taste and delicacy. Mrs. Page is a charming matron and mother, Mrs. Ford has not an atom of evil in her hearty jollity, but a sense of fun in her smiling half-opened mouth, showing a range of fair white teeth, and speaking of sport with the fat sack-loving knight. In their full matronly beauty they contrast happily with Anne, come forth for the first time into society, and also more lovely, more girlishly innocent and timid in the latter than in the former work. The earlier picture has been painted with a vehicle that has failed in the browns—the repetition, painted with pure linseed oil, is as fresh as from the easel.

It is no part of our purpose to enter further into the biographies of our painters than as the incidents of their lives may be supposed to have influenced their art. It is therefore not necessary to describe the causes that led Leslie's friends to obtain for him, or Leslie to accept, an appointment from the American government as teacher of drawing at the Military Academy of West Point on the Hudson. No doubt his friends in America would desire to have a relative so much loved, and who had already achieved such celebrity, once more amongst them; and, looking to the uncertain income at that time to be derived from the arts, and the expenses incident to an increasing family, Leslie was induced to value the offer of a settled income. We can well recollect how much regret was expressed, both by his companions in art and the public when, in 1833, it became known that Leslie was returning to America. With that honest right-mindedness which ever characterized him, he offered, before leaving, to resign his membership of the Academy. From this course, however, he was dissuaded by the president; not only because his journey was avowedly experimental, but that other members of the Academy had resided abroad during a long series of years, while some even discontinued aiding its exhibitions.

It is strange that Leslie, who it is well known thought any kind of art-teaching unnecessary, and who himself, though richly accomplished as an artist, was not much grounded in its elements—painting from feeling rather than from knowledge—should have undertaken the office of teaching elementary art to others. To those already sufficiently advanced to appreciate his advice and instruction, they would have been indeed invaluable; but for

the routine of elementary instruction he was of all men the most unfitted. It is no wonder, therefore, that the task was wearisome and his duties irksome; but when to this was added letters, reports, and attendance at long sessional examinations, he soon found the post a burden not to be borne, and that the irksomeness of his duties quite overbalanced his pleasure in the society of affectionate relatives, the fixity of his income, or the hopes of future advantages to his children. Moreover, the climate did not prove so healthy as had been anticipated, and the change was not agreeable to Mrs. Leslie; what wonder, then, that ere six months had passed he was again on ship-board to return to England? He had quitted it in September, 1833, and he left America in April, 1834. He left West Point ere yet a leaf was on the trees; and after a quick run across the Atlantic, as they neared the Isle of Wight, he had the pleasure of seeing the land green with the first honours of spring, "which," says he in his journal, "increased our joy at finding ourselves again in England, from which I have felt from that moment no inclination to estrange myself."

It has been urged that as the pursuit of literature, poetry, or the arts is but too often scantily remunerated, Government places or appointments, in which the duties are in any way analogous to these pursuits, should constitute some of the rewards to which poets and painters may look forward. We do not agree with the views that would tie down a finely-touched poet to the dull duties of an exciseman, or, as in this instance, spoil a man of real genius for art by saddling him with the drudgery of a government drawing-mastership. Fortunately, Leslie speedily found out his mistake. He

returned to England in the full vigour of his art powers, and with plenty of encouragement to use them. He found on his arrival that a sad change had taken place in his former intimate, Newton; whose mind had given way, and it had become necessary to place him in a private asylum. From this time Constable exerted much influence over Leslie's art; an influence which he was quite ready to acknowledge. Writing to him from Petworth, in 1834, Leslie says:—"I am afraid you did not quite understand what I meant by your *keen eye*. I am only afraid of it, because I know no fault can escape it." Constable, no doubt, was a valuable critic, though certainly he was a sharp one, and could say cutting things to others, when he could hardly bear a retort. As we have seen, Leslie was much swayed by his opinion. He tells us that Constable had what the phrenologists call "love of approbation" largely developed; but he quite overlooks the landscape painter's intense self-esteem, which made him strong in his expression of opinion, and enabled him to overweigh, at times, the better judgment of his friend. From Constable, as has been already said, he adopted the coolness and greyness seen in his latter works; and it may also be that the looser handling and sketchy execution of many of them were derived from the same source. Leslie soon settled down to his usual quiet and his usual class of pictures. It is to this period we owe some of the best works in the Sheepshanks Collection; now, by the munificent gift of the owner, at South Kensington, and the property of the nation. Such are the "Autolycus," the "Perdita," the "Infant Princes in the Tower," and the second "Dinner at Page's House."

In 1838, Leslie had a commission to paint the Coronation of our beloved Queen, and produced a picture bright with sunshine and female loveliness, and of a far different character to what is usually the result of such commissions. In 1841, he again received a royal commission; this time to paint the "Christening of the Princess Royal." His friend Constable had died in 1837, a great grief to Leslie, who says of himself that before he knew Constable he really knew nothing or worse than nothing of landscape; for, he adds, "I admired as poetical, styles which I now see to be mannered, conventional, or extravagant." His admiration continued after his friend's death, and the landscape backgrounds to the two pictures of "Who can This Be?" and "Who can This Be From?" show that this influence was still predominant.

There are few more very marked incidents in the life of our painter. His powers were now fully estimated and his works were eagerly sought for. He was active in his duties as a member of the Academy, and in 1826 was elected Professor of Painting, a post which he held for five seasons. In his early years he had opposed the admission of engravers to the full honours of the Academy, but latterly being convinced of their claim, he re-opened the question before the general assembly and became one of the warmest advocates of the measure; which he had the satisfaction of seeing carried and approved by her Majesty, as it was by the profession and the outside public. His children grew up around him and his home life was a very happy one; and in this respect we may fairly contrast him with Wilkie and Mulready, as we have no doubt that his home life greatly influenced his

art. Wilkie lived and died in the coldness of celibacy. Mulready, though married early, had little of happiness in his family circle. But Leslie, surrounded by sons and daughters, exceedingly fond of their childish fun and humour, and a great observer at all times, has given us pictures illustrative of the simple happiness of childhood, which stand quite apart from the recipe notions of second-rate painters. Such for instance is his lovely group of the "Mother and Child," belonging to Mrs. Gibbons. The young mother has taken her child from the cot on to her lap, and as it lies on its back, is burying her joyous face in its little bosom and revelling in happy kisses. And the "Playing at Horses," the property of Sir R. Wigram; what an insight does it give us into the small pleasures that make up the happiness of childhood! What a pretty little quaint incident, picked up from the playhours of his own children! There, in the painter's parlour, seated in a chair as proudly as if in a gilded chariot, is his youngest daughter, with the look of a grand duchess taking an airing, her parasol up to screen her from an imaginary sun; two other much younger little ones act the part of horses, and are harnessed with string to the chair, their pretty little prancing attitudes as they give pace without moving, so true to childish action, with the little fat feet in blue shoes, are perfect, as is the action of the hands and arms.

Then again how happily has Leslie seized the incident of the children's prayers in his own household, to give a touch of matter-of-fact truth to "The Two Young Princes in the Tower;" and who but a father, who had watched the little shy ways of his own young daughters, could have embodied such sweet presentments

of the children of the vicar; or the timid anxiety to get satisfactorily through their task of the young ladies in the portrait picture of the "Grosvenor Family:" a work which, after many years, dwells on our memory from this finely touched sentiment. And as the painter's children grew to maidenly years and to manhood, we often see in his pictures glimpses of their forms and faces; and we know that many graceful actions in his best works arise from the hints obtained from his family circle. But this happiness was to have a rude shock and a sad termination: early in 1857 the painter's second daughter, Caroline, was married, greatly to the satisfaction of her parents; everything seemed to promise a bright future for the young couple, but a sudden change in her health took place almost from the marriage day, and she gradually faded away, dying shortly after the birth of her little boy, in March 1859. Leslie did not long survive the blow occasioned by her death. He paid a visit to Petworth to seek relief in change of scene, but seems to have found none, and although at first his complaint was not thought fatal, he sank by degrees and died on the 5th of May 1859.

It is somewhat singular that his last entry in his pleasant gossiping diary was a story of Mr. Rogers, that "those who go to heaven will be very much surprised at the people they find there, and very much surprised at those they do not find there;" and on a slip of paper attached to his will he writes, "I trust I may die as I now am, in the entire belief of the Christian religion, as I understand it from the books of the New Testament, that is, as a direct revelation of the will and goodness of God towards the world, by

Jesus Christ the Saviour and Judge of the world." So lived and so died this rare artist and good man. Those who read his diary and letters will feel how full he was of true Christian charity—how prompt to speak well, how slow to speak ill of others—how glad to find beauties rather than to criticize defects: while those who had the happiness of knowing him will treasure in their memory the pleasant recollections of a kind friend and a man of true genius, and hope at least to find him there; if, through God's mercy, they should obtain entrance to his future kingdom.

Leslie was an artist from feeling rather than from instruction; he had little early grounding in his profession, yet he drew correctly, from an innate perception of form and sense of grace; and he painted well from having obtained a simple method for the expression of his first thoughts, to which he remained constant to the finish. He was happy in his choice of subjects, and his own good taste and sweet nature led him to treat them suitably. He was far beyond either of his competitors in his sense of beauty.

Leslie's embodiment of female beauty was not of that eclectic kind sought for by the artists of Italy, who aimed to present to us the purity and excellence of divine or saintly persons; it was rather the fullest embodiment of the loveliness with which we are surrounded in our daily life. Theirs was an abstract beauty, cold and impassive, removed from the sphere of human passions into the calm atmosphere of holiness, and hence their beauty had little variety; while his was but true English flesh and blood, not glorified—for it is hardly possible to add to the beauty of the race—but lighted up by passion, feeling,

and the nobler sentiments and affections, and enhanced by purity and truth. Thus his beauty was varied in every character; first, from being individual, and further, from the varied characters he had to delineate. Take, as an instance, his lovely duchess, in the picture already spoken of; how different is her beauty from that of her waiting maidens, what a *riant* expression, what an inward sense of humour, what a self-composed grace and matronly dignity, repelling every intrusion upon that sweetness and condescension which leads her to enjoy pleasure in the midst of her attendants. How different, again, is the beauty of the sweet, modest shepherd-princess, Perdita; she whom our great poet had imagined, but whom it was left to Leslie to present before us, so lovely, yet so noble, that as the poet says—

> "Nothing she does or seems
> But smacks of something greater than herself."

These, too, are wholly distinct from the matronly beauty of the two Windsor yeomen's wives, or the somewhat fretful fairness of the old burgomaster's wife, in "Who Can This Be?" proud, and somewhat dissatisfied and rather loving the flattery, although she contemns the false flatterer. Then, again, we have the simple girlish beauty of the vicar's daughters, regarding, with somewhat of envious wonder, the easy impudence of the frail impertinents who impose upon their unsophisticated innocence as courtly ladies; and the females that are assembled to greet the merry monarch at Tillietudlem: well might his Majesty bear with the stately salute of the mistress of the mansion, to be allowed to pay his devoirs to her fair followers. Nör may we forget that bevy of lovely aristocracy, so beautiful, yet so diverse in beauty;

no dreams and shadows of the painter's brain, but real English maidens attendant at the coronation of England's queen.

Leslie was very happy in his illustrations of Shakspeare, the more that he has made the poet's characters individuals, rather than abstractions. Fuseli's illustrations of Shakspeare were very grand, but often very intangible, and certainly his characters had little of individuality; his women were all of one type, and that rather of the Doll-tear-sheet class, neither lovely nor loveable: even his Mirandas and Cordelias were more masculine than feminine. His men, massive in style but abstract in character, impress us with somewhat of awe, but with little of humanity; and still less with that deep English humanity that pervades all the plays of Shakspeare, even when the scene is laid in other lands. West painted little from the great dramatist, and what he did bordered on the mock heroic; as in the "Lear in the Storm." Northcote had some English individuality about his illustrations, and Opie some English strength, degenerating into coarseness: none of them had any sense of the racy humour of the poet; while Smirke, who had humour, verged somewhat on caricature, and failed to carry us back in any degree to the poet's age. It was from his sense of beauty and grace, his individuality in the treatment of his characters, and his fine appreciation of humour, that Leslie approximated to the spirit of his author, and has given us more pleasure in his pictorial illustrations of Shakspeare than those whose works were of far greater pretensions.

Before his time, little attention had been paid to costume, and though we cannot praise Leslie for any

amount of accuracy in this respect, yet his dresses have at least an air of truth; look as if they were made for the wearers, and are far beyond the vapid conventionality of Peters, Hamilton, Wheatley, and others, whose costume seems to have been devised at second-hand from the stage dresses of their own period. In painting his costume, Leslie used drapery, but rarely dresses; he had the happy art to improvise them from scanty materials. He tells us that he "made them up from old prints and pictures," and we know that he was able so to dispose loose drapery on his model (for we believe he never used a lay figure), as to enable him to represent his costume without the aid of the milliner. Thus he managed to clothe his figures without detracting from their grace and elegance, and without the passing peculiarities of fashion. In his art there is nothing stilted, nothing extravagant, and it is without the slightest taint of vulgarity. The treatment of his subjects is so simple, that we lose the sense of a picture, and feel that the incident is presented to us as it must have happened; fashion had no part in his works, and we have no doubt that a future age will own them as true as the present, and with no less love: it may be said that he popularized the class of refined drama-pictures.

Without being too imitative, Leslie was true to Nature, and has left us this example: that a work which is generally true as a whole, is far more true than that which is built up from an exact imitation of the several parts. As an instance of this, his treatment of utensils of glass or silver in his dinner scenes may be quoted; thus the vessels on the table in "The Dinner at Page's House," or "The Duke's Chaplain Enraged and Leaving

the Table;" or again the jewellery and trinkets in "The Pack of Autolycus." In all these instances, by means of a very few touches, more effect of truth, more real glitter and sparkle is given, than by the most elaborate imitation. The same may be said of the treatment of candlelight effect in his picture of "Trissotin reading the Sonnet, from *Les Femmes Savantes*," now in the Sheepshanks Collection; there a truer effect is given of the brilliancy of candlelight by the slightest means, than in the most laboured works of Schalken or Hornthorst.

Leslie was an agreeable companion, full of anecdotes of his brother painters, and of others who had been thrown into his company; the sense of humour so prevailed in him that a story with little real point became interesting from his mode of telling it. As a writer on art he is pleasant, intelligent and kindly, if not very deep. His diary, published after his death, gives us a very agreeable insight into the painter's home life and gentle nature. His life of Constable is a picture not so much of that painter as others saw him, but as clothed with the kindlier nature of Leslie. Of the three painters we have classed together, we value a picture by Wilkie; we are surprised by a picture of Mulready's, but we love a picture by Leslie. As to the impression he made on our school, it may be said that he perfected the class of drama-pictures, and has been greatly instrumental in banishing vulgarity and coarseness from that branch of art.

The art, as practised by Leslie, naturally leads us to that of Newton, who was so closely linked to him both by ties of country, friendship, and by the class of art both followed. There are, in fact, so many points of

resemblance, that much of the criticism on Leslie applies equally to the art of his friend and companion.

Gilbert Stuart Newton, R.A., was born at Halifax, Nova Scotia, 2nd September, 1794. He was the son of an officer in the British Commissariat Department, or, according to other authorities, of an officer of Customs in that province, who had left Washington when the British were driven from Boston by General Washington. His uncle, on his mother's side, was Gilbert Stuart, distinguished in America as a portrait painter; and after his father's death his widowed mother returned with him in 1803 to Charleston, near Boston. Dunlop, the American biographer, says :—" Newton congratulated himself upon being born a subject of the king and aristocracy of Great Britain, and on one occasion in New York, at a large dinner-party, got up and disclaimed being a citizen of the United States;" but he adds, " Newton cannot, however, shake off the stigma of being an American painter."

Newton was " reared " at Boston, and intended for commercial life, was placed with a merchant; but art prevailed. We do not know from his early history what led him to foster this desire, unless it was the reputation of his uncle Stuart, under whom he was early placed for study. Stuart himself had practised his art for some years in England, from whence he returned in 1805. One of his countrymen tells, that he left the brightest prospects in England, and returned to his country from his admiration of her new institutions, and a desire to paint the portrait of Washington. "On hearing this" (we quote from Leslie's diary), " Sir Thomas Lawrence said, ' I knew Stuart well, and I believe the real cause of

his leaving England was his having become tired of the inside of some of our prisons.' On which Lord Holland remarked, 'After all, then, it was his love of freedom that took him to America.'" In 1817, one of Newton's elder brothers, who was engaged in commerce, brought the future painter with him to Italy and left him at Florence, that he might see some of the master-works before finally settling down to his studies.

He remained some months in Italy, and then repaired to Paris, where he met Leslie; they travelled together through the Netherlands, arriving in London in 1817, and from that time were firm friends. Leslie introduced him to Washington Irving on an excursion to Richmond, and tells that the three passed a day of such frolic and fun as became such men; and from that time they were three inseparables. Irving says in one of his letters that on Newton's arrival in London, "he did nothing for three days but scamper up and down like a cat in a panic;" and in the same letter adds, "Newton's manikin has at length arrived, and he is to have it home in a few days, when it is to be hoped he will give up rambling abroad and stay at home, drink tea, and play the flute to *the* lady." He made many visits to Sloane Street, which were in pursuit of "the lady" with whom he was much smitten. Irving again alludes to this in 1820. "I find," says he, "the Sloane Street romance is still unfinished . . . . Newton is busy with a brush in each hand, and his hair standing on end, turning Ann's portraits into likenesses of Mary Queen of Scots, General Washington, and the Lord knows who."

Newton, however, settled down to work in 1820, and became a student of the Royal Academy; although, as we

find from the same sources, he was very fond of society and naturally formed for it; hence we may infer that he was not very constant in his attendance at the schools, which may account for his weakness and want of skill as a draughtsman. From this time he was a constant companion of Irving and Leslie; and a very pleasant trio they must have been. "Nothing," says Leslie, "could be more agreeable than our daily intercourse; we visited in the same families, chiefly Americans resident in London, and generally dined together at the York Chop House, in Wardour Street:" a house that we believe still remains, and has been the resort of many successions of young artists, when the struggle to get one's head above the crowd was far greater than at present, and the chop or eating-house was the usual resource after the labours of the day.

But, although Newton loved society, he had real genius, and made rapid improvement in his art. In 1821, he painted and exhibited at the British Institution a small head, which he called the "Forsaken," and a picture of "Lovers' Quarrels," and about the same time his clever picture of "The Importunate Author." This was a most successful work, and gave evidence of his great observation of humour and character. Two figures are pacing up and down a raised terrace; the victim, manly and erect, of a noble presence, but with a look of the deepest disgust and weariness, holds his watch in his hand, as if to intimate in the most marked manner, that the time of another and more pleasant appointment is passing away. The poet hangs on him and holds him fast; reading as they walk along, he is determined to inflict on his companion every stanza of his dreary and

tedious composition: he heeds not—he will not heed—the expressive hints of impatience and contempt it calls forth. Leslie tells us, incidentally, that Peter Coxe volunteered to sit to Newton for the poet: he was the author of the "Social Day," a poem which he victimised artists to illustrate, and certainly must have looked the character. Wilkie relates that Coxe came to him to read some of his poetry, and being interrupted by a visit of Lord Mulgrave, he waited for his departure, and then resumed and read the remainder; Wilkie, most likely to get rid of him, proposed a walk, and bored, no doubt, went into a house which had a notice of being to let, to inquire about it: "When," says he, "Mr. Coxe pulled out his manuscript and began to read it to the woman who had charge of the house." Such a man needed no "making up" to sit for "The Importunate Author."

In 1821, Newton was for the first time an exhibitor at the Royal Academy, where he sent two portraits; and again in 1822, he exhibited two portraits: one of them, his friend Irving, was engraved for "The Sketch Book," which Murray published in 1823. In his dislike for the labour of study, Newton took to portrait-painting as requiring less exertion of mind. Irving, who felt his talent, remonstrated with him; but as he defended a weak part of his picture, so he defended the propriety of his choice, talked of Vandyke and Reynolds, and parted with his friend in a huff. Some time after Irving called, and finding him at work on his poet reading his verses to an impatient gallant, complimented him on being in the right road; and from that time Newton devoted himself to those subjects in which he became so eminently successful.

From 1823 till 1833, Newton was a continuous exhibitor at Somerset House. In 1823 he sent the first subject picture, "M. Pourceaugnac, or the Patient in spite of Himself." In 1828, he was elected an associate of the Royal Academy, his picture of that year having been "The Vicar of Wakefield reconciling his Wife to Olivia." This picture, as treated by him, is of touching interest, and he well deserved the honours it won for him. Mrs. Primrose sits apart in the wretched barn to which their misfortunes have reduced them, determined to be firm and unyielding in her anger to her erring daughter; but while rigidly fixed in her seat, it is evident that every muscle quivers, every nerve thrills with desire to turn to her lost child. Sophia kneels tenderly and entreatingly beside her mother—never sweeter face looked pleadingly into a mother's eyes—the delicate fingers touch her mother's clasped hands with the most refined perception of the inter-communion of feeling through the sense of touch. The two little brothers look on with the truest expression of childish dread and wonder. The father has a manly form and characteristic head: he is the picture of a Christian gentleman; to him Olivia instinctively clings, while Moses, dreading his mother's anger, lingers at the door. The face of Olivia is hidden; Sophia's is the true type of innocent maidenhood, the flesh rendered more delicate and fresh by its contrast with black drapery. As to its faults, the textures are hardly sufficiently imitative, and some of the accessories are much neglected; the toys of the children are mere splashes of colour, on a mass of dirty brown. This should not be, in a picture, which from its size claims to be hung directly opposite the eye. The im-

pasto of the picture is excellent, and the colouring very perfect.

English painters have been sneered at for their circumscribed reading, because they so often take their subjects from *Don Quixote* and the *Vicar of Wakefield;* but they might rather shift the blame on the public, for whom they paint. This view was entertained by Irving, who, writing from Madrid says, "*Don Quixote* and *Gil Blas* are universal works known throughout the world, and painting from them is like painting from the Bible." In fact as the theatrical public rather enjoy an old Joe Miller, well put, than a new joke which wants some reflection to catch it; so the painters' public like pictures from books which they have known from childhood, better than from works with which they are less intimately acquainted.

Newton justified his election as associate by his picture of "Camilla Introduced to Gil Blas at the Inn," exhibited in 1829. He had previously painted in 1827, "The Prince of Spain's Visit to Catalina:" indeed his taste seemed much directed to Spanish subjects; and as Leslie was at the same time painting from *Don Quixote*, Irving, then at Madrid, congratulated them on their choice, and regretted that, as they were now painting Spanish pictures, they could not get a peep at the Spanish people. This has become a common journey with our painters since Wilkie led the way; but it may be doubted if the pictures of either Leslie or Newton would have been much improved by a more direct Spanish flavour. In the years 1830 and 1831, Newton painted and exhibited some of his finest works: namely, in 1830, "Yorick and the Grisette," now in the

National Gallery, "Shylock and Jessica," and the "Abbot Boniface" from Walter Scott's novel of *The Abbot*. Leslie says that Newton took the idea of the figure from Sydney Smith, whom he met when on a visit to Walter Scott. In 1831, Newton's pictures were "Portia and Bassanio," with "Cordelia and the Physician." The former is in the Sheepshanks' collection, and although sadly injured by the use of asphaltum, it deserves attention as exhibiting some of the painter's best qualities. We well remember the impression it made on ourselves when first exhibited. It shows Newton's great feeling for colour, expression and beauty, his small power of drawing, and his weak execution. Bassanio has just received the letter which relates the danger of his friend. His startled surprise at the news which greets him is that of a gentleman, subdued, but real. The action is excellent; yet the legs are like sticks, and the mouth wholly awry; though this may have been added to by the injuries arising from the use of bad pigments. The dogs at his feet have hardly the semblance of the canine race. The Portia is very sweet; the action graceful, the face full of tender solicitude, her deep earnest eyes questioning the sad thoughts flitting across the brows of Bassanio; thoughts which she claims her right to share. The colour is very agreeable, the flesh delicate; the blue robe of the lady is well chosen as to colour, and elegantly contrasted with that of the sleeve of the under garment, although this, at the shoulder, appears to join to nothing. The neck is sadly swelled, and hardly compatible with beauty; but, as a whole, the picture is a work of such feeling, elegance, colour, and sweet expression, as to make us entirely forget its defects.

These pictures had made a great impression in Newton's favour, and in 1832 he was elected to the full honours of the Academy.

He now sought to establish a home for himself, and, the romance of Sloane Street forgotten, he made a voyage to America to find a wife, with whom he returned to this country at the end of the year. Newton had so continually painted the same type of beauty in his pictures, that his brother artists thought he must be favoured with sittings by some female friend with whom they were unacquainted. On his return from America with the lady whom he had married, her features were so like the face he had usually pictured, that those who were unaware of the circumstances thought they had at length discovered the hidden beauty he had so long worshipped; but it was afterwards understood that this was not the case, his acquaintance with the lady not having dated previous to his journey.

During Newton's American visit slight symptoms of insanity had manifested themselves; unhappily, these rapidly increased soon after his return. He painted no more pictures of any importance after his election, and it was soon found necessary to place him in a private asylum, where he died on the 5th August, 1835, and was buried in Wimbledon Churchyard. Leslie tells us in his diary, that Newton's mind seemed somewhat restored a few days before his death. During the rapid consumption that ended his life he read only the Bible and Prayer-book, and when he became too weak to read, they were read to him by an attendant. The day before he died he desired to hear the funeral service, saying, "It will soon be read over me." He listened with great

attention, and remarked that "it was very fine." His wife and son returned to America shortly after his death, and the widow soon married a second time.

As a painter, Newton was sadly deficient in executive power, and as he also drew timidly he worked out his pictures from feeling rather than with knowledge. His sense of colour was far greater than Leslie's; and, as we have seen, Leslie was much influenced by him. Although his pictures are very unequal in other respects, they are always agreeable for colour; a quality which the most easily attracts the multitude, and pleasantly introduces them to the higher qualities of the painter. His "Shylock and Jessica," his "Vicar of Wakefield," and his "Captain Macheath" are all fine examples. How rare is the appreciative power that could place in pleasant juxtaposition the peculiar orange-red and blue-green of the dress of Moses in the "Vicar!" while the "Macheath" is quite a bouquet to the eye. Newton displayed great beauty and loveliness in his females; there is a peculiar tender innocence of expression in his Sophia, Cordelia, and Portia, as well as in the fancy heads which he painted. He had some humour, though not nearly so much as his friend Leslie, and a tolerable appreciation of character. Thus his "Captain Macheath with Lucy and Polly," now at Bowood, and certainly one of his best works, is somewhat Hogarthian in its character and expression, with a sense of colour throughout, and a beauty and tenderness in Polly, which Hogarth, with all his power, could not approach. It is satisfactory to observe that it is less changed than his other works; for, unfortunately, Newton did not exclude asphaltum from his palette, nor confine himself to simple vehicles

for his pigments, and the result has been that all his works have more or less suffered, while some are in danger of perishing altogether. He was not a prolific painter; and we should judge from his pictures that, though working rapidly, he arrived at their completion after many changes and much elaboration. From his first picture in the Academy, in 1821, until his last in 1833, he only exhibited thirty-three works; of which eight were portraits, three only heads, and twelve subject pictures.

Newton must have had many agreeable qualities as a companion, for we find him more frequently alluded to, and remembrance made of him in Irving's letters to Leslie, than any other of his friends in England; he seems to have delighted in his society as much as he admired his works. Yet with all his sociable qualities he was said to delight in contradiction, especially of widely-received opinions, and he overflowed with self-esteem. A certain amount of self-esteem is a very necessary ingredient in the character of an artist, counteracting those fits of depression which the difficulties of the art call forth, and sustaining him during the tedious progress to that excellence which too often seems to recede as we advance, and is but partially achieved even by the greatest; but it is of all mental qualities the most dangerous if over-indulged, in such cases often landing its unfortunate victim in insanity.

Many stories of Newton's conceit and vanity were current at a time when the narrators little dreamt of the sad calamity in which they were to end. Thus it is said that on a brother artist pointing out some strange mistake in one of Newton's pictures, he replied, "Yes, it is purposely left so; every picture should have a fault, this

is the *one* fault of mine." And Leslie said, "If a friend who sees the progress of a picture objects to any part, Newton defends it vehemently, perhaps, like Sir Fretful, asserts that it is the best portion of his work; but if the friend returns the next day, he may find that part expunged and repainted. So great is his facility that he never hesitates to dash out a figure or a group; and, as Mr. Irving has said, if one of his figures on the surface of his canvas could be scraped off, we should find half a dozen under it, or might detect six legs to one man, four painted and covered over before the artist had adopted the last pair."

Newton loved to have it thought that he lived expensively and kept a *recherché* table. An artist calling on him just as dinner was served was invited to partake of it. It consisted merely of some mutton-chops, but when these were removed Newton asked the servant with an air of surprise why there were no ices, as if these luxuries formed part of his daily meal, and had been strangely overlooked on this occasion. When Newton was painting the picture of "Portia and Bassanio," a man of fashion, who was as conceited of his legs as the painter was of his art, criticized those of the principal figure. Newton asked him to pose that he might study them from him, to which he readily consented, and was duly invested in silk tights for that purpose. He had, however, stood but a few minutes when a lady visitor was announced, and the model was requested to retire for a minute or two into the painter's back study; there, in the depth of winter, half dressed, without the means of completing his toilet, and without a fire, he was kept shivering for a long half-hour while the lady was examining

the studies and sketches; a visit which Newton did not hurry to a conclusion, perhaps well satisfied that he who had criticized his drawing was suffering for his meddling.

From the shortness of his life, and the few pictures he painted, Newton's art was eclipsed by Leslie's, and he left very little impression on our school; yet, had he lived, his art would most probably have diverged from that of his friend, and his colouring and sense of beauty would have obtained for him a far higher reputation than he even now enjoys.

We cannot close this chapter without adverting to the loss art suffered in the untimely death of *Augustus Leopold Egg, R.A.* One who worked somewhat in the spirit of Leslie, and who, had he lived longer, might in some degree have compensated for his loss. He was born in Piccadilly on the 2nd of May, 1816, the son of the well-known gunsmith. Showing a desire to follow art, on leaving school he was placed in 1834 in Sass's academy; there he made such progress that in the succeeding year he was admitted a student of the Royal Academy. In 1837 he exhibited his first picture at the gallery in Suffolk Street, and in 1838 at the Academy, "A Spanish Girl," which was much praised. After this time, we find his name, with but few intervals, as an annual exhibitor on the walls of the Royal Academy; his pictures increasing in interest and excellence, the subjects chosen being of the class painted by Leslie and Newton, without, however, the genial humour of the former. In 1849 he was elected an associate, and in 1861 a full member of the Academy. His health had for many years been delicate, his lungs were weak and he suffered from chronic asthma, which obliged him, in the latter years of

his life, to retire to the warmer climates of Italy or the south of France to avoid the rigour of our winters. The winter of 1862-3 was passed in Algiers with the same object, and his health seemed so much benefited by the climate of Africa that he resumed his painting, and there was every prospect of his return to England and the practice of his profession, when his imprudence in taking a long ride on a bleak day caused a renewal of the worst symptoms of his disorder, to which he succumbed on the 25th of March, 1863, and was buried in the immediate neighbourhood of the city of Algiers.

We have said that Egg's range of subjects was somewhat similar to that of Leslie and Newton; but his vein was oftener sad than humorous, and he was without the abiding sense of beauty and gentleness that characterize the females of both of these painters. Egg's first pictures were painted with a broad and free pencil, and a clear touch, and his execution gave the sense of great ease and facility. The picture, "A Scene from Le Diable Boiteux," painted in 1844, and now No. 444 in the Vernon collection, is an example. It shows his ready handling, his delicate appreciation of harmony of tint and general tone, and from his simple manner of painting stands well. His sense of colour was greater than that of Leslie, but inferior to the colouring of Newton, while he greatly excelled both in his execution. As he advanced in art he became impressed with the manner of the pre-Raphaelites; he purchased some of their pictures, and encouraged them by his own example, giving to his own works more laborious completion and greater force of colour. Of these, the best specimens of his pencil are "Pepys's Introduction to Nell Gwynne,"

painted in 1852; and a scene from Thackeray's *History of Henry Esmond, Esq.*, illustrating the following passage:—"'Kneel down,' says Mrs. Beatrix, 'we dub you knight with this,' and she waved the sword over his head." This was exhibited in 1858. We miss in the "Pepys" the beauty Leslie would have given to Nelly, whom Pepys takes care to tell us was "a most pretty woman;" adding, "I kissed her, as did my wife, and a mighty pretty soul she is."

The picture wants the saucy sweetness Leslie would have added, but it was richly coloured, and a work of great merit. Egg was less successful in the picture painted the same year, exhibited without a title, and with only the following suggestive quotation:—"Aug. 4: Have just heard that *B.* has been dead more than a fortnight; so his poor children have now lost both their parents. I hear *She* was seen on Friday last, near the Strand, evidently without a place to lay her head. What a fall hers has been!" The picture, in three compartments, represented the miseries arising from a wife's unfaithfulness. The painter's treatment of the subject was too painful to please, and it remained on his walls until his death. The same was the case with his "Life and Death of Buckingham," painted in 1855. This was in two compartments: the first showing Buckingham in the midst of riot and debauchery with the young bloods of his day; the second, his death, as described by the poet:—

"In the worst inn's worst room."

The moral was a good one, but it was too sad; and after its sale at Christie's, in 1863, the purchaser is understood to have separated the two pictures, to prevent the extreme pain arising from their contrast.

CHAPTER X.

OLD CROME AND THE NORWICH SCHOOL.

John Crome—His Birthplace and Origin—Picturesque Surroundings—Tries House-painting and Sign-painting—Sketches the local Scenery—His Poverty and the attendant Difficulties—Finds a Patron—And has Access to Dutch and Flemish Art—Helped by Sir William Beechey—Teaches Drawing—Founds the Norwich Society and the Norwich Exhibition—His Mode of Painting—And Choice of Subject—Follower of the Dutch School—Influence of Wilson's Art—His "Mousehold Heath," "Hautbois Common," "Coast Scene near Yarmouth"—Etchings—Death—The Norwich School—*James Stark*—Articled to Crome—Comes to London—Studies at the Academy—Gains a Premium at the British Institution—Returns to Norwich—Publishes the Scenery of the Rivers of Norfolk—Comes again to London—Then resides at Windsor—Character of his Art—*George Vincent* also a Pupil of Crome—His Art—And fine Painting of Greenwich Hospital—Falls into Difficulties and Neglect—*John Sell Cotman*—His early Career—Teaches Drawing—His Publications—Opinion upon his Art—The Norwich Society.

THE landscape painters of whose art we have hitherto treated, were men, whatsoever their birth or origin, who eventually established themselves in London to take part in the fierce struggle for reputation with which artists have to contend in that great city. We have now to notice the labours of an artist born in a county town far distant from London, where he chose to remain, seeking fame in his own lesser world, satisfied to be first there rather than second in the metropolis. *John Crome* (generally called Old Crome to distinguish him from his son, who also became an artist,) was born in Norwich on

the 21st of December, 1769. He was the son of a journeyman weaver, and first saw the light in a mean public-house in that city. We have no account of his childish years, but the elder Mr. Bacon of Norwich tells us that he could hardly be said to have enjoyed even the common instruction of the most ordinary schools. At twelve years of age he was placed as a servant in the house of Dr. Rigby, where his principal duties consisted in carrying out the medicines prescribed and prepared by the doctor. He was a boy of a lively and enterprising disposition, and when of the suitable age apprenticed himself to Frank Whisler, a house and sign painter of Norwich; partly, it is said, moved by a love of art and a desire to make himself acquainted, however roughly, with art processes.

Thus far, then, we find the future painter wholly without those advantages which now lie at the doors of people of all ranks. Day and night-schools for elementary education abound in all cities, and there are few which do not—none which cannot—have a well-appointed school of art, wherein the artisan and the mechanic, the tradesman, and the children of the resident gentry, may obtain sound instruction in the rudiments of art, and be taught to overcome the difficulties of execution which beset the beginner. In Crome's time this was not the case. Before the age of railroads, Norfolk and its capital city were outlying districts as it were; rarely visited by the curious—rarely subject to change or improvement. The city itself was picturesque, full of antiquarian interest, and seemed as if it had slept while other cities of the kingdom were up and at work. The lanes in the suburbs, the banks of

the river, the heaths, the commons, were wild, untrimmed, and picturesque; the old labourer's cottage with its thatched roof, the farms with their rural homesteads, were scattered close around the city; villas and terraces had not yet, like drilled intruders, broken in upon their picturesque decay; the river as it wound with silvery surface through the fat meadows, or stretched away towards the sea, widened into lakelets called broads, and bore on its way, inland or seaward, the picturesque barges, or wherries as they are locally called, whose tanned sails, ruddy in the sunlight, contrasted so well with the green of the landscape. Thus the very sleepiness of the land, not yet awakened to afford instruction to its children, was yet peculiarly fitted to call into life an instinctive love of art such as that with which young Crome was gifted.

Meanwhile, Crome followed his trade as a house painter, painting, as he advanced in skill, signs as well as houses, and in his leisure hours sketching the local scenery we have just described—scenery he loved through life, and which forms the subjects of some of his best works. He early formed an acquaintance with a fellow-townsman of the name of Robert Ladbrooke, then a youth of about his own age, and the two lodging together, sketched and painted for their mutual improvement. Many tales are told of the poverty of our painter, of his having manufactured his own brushes, and used his mother's apron as a canvas whereon to practise his art; such tales are common to other painters as well as Crome. No doubt he had his difficulties; no doubt, coming somewhat irregularly into art through the introduction of house and sign painting, it was hard to obtain his first footing; but

friends generally are found when the man is resolved and in earnest, and Mr. Thomas Harvey, of Catton, is spoken of as one who aided the young artist with his advice (for he was himself a painter) and introduced him to others as a teacher of drawing, by which he obtained means of following art in the intervals of his teaching. Better still, Mr. Harvey had a small collection of Dutch and Flemish pictures, and to the study of these Crome diligently applied himself; and through them we may no doubt trace the affinity many of his pictures have to those of Hobbema.

Mr. Harvey gave young Crome an introduction to Sir William Beechey; who, his biographer states, also commenced life with a house painter of Norwich, but was then in the height of his reputation as a portrait painter. Be this as it may, Beechey felt an interest in the young landscape painter from the first interview, as he himself tells us. "Crome," says he, "when first I knew him, must have been about twenty years old, and was a very awkward, uninformed country lad, but extremely shrewd in all his remarks upon art, though he wanted words and terms to express his meaning. As often as he came to town he never failed to call upon me, and to get what information I was able to give him upon the subject of that particular branch of art which he made his study. His visits were very frequent, and all his time was spent in my painting room when I was not particularly engaged. He improved so rapidly that he delighted and astonished me. He always dined and spent his evenings with me." Beechey had gone to Norwich in 1781, and lived there four or five years, painting portraits of the clergy and gentry of the town and neighbourhood. Shortly after Crome's introduction to him, which must

have been about 1790, Beechey was elected into the Academy; he was a rising man, and soon to become the court painter, so that Crome, through him, would no doubt learn much of the art and artists of the metropolis.

Crome married early in life, and having to struggle to maintain an increasing family, he gave himself up largely to that branch of his art yielding the most steady and certain remuneration; teaching drawing both in the families of his townsmen and of the neighbouring gentry, as well as in the surrounding schools. Teaching brought him many friends, and gave him local fame, but did not provide purchasers for his pictures. At that time purchasers, or as they then proudly termed themselves, "patrons of art," were few, and it was only when a reputation had been already won, that an artist was likely to have his works sought after. During his lifetime this was hardly the case with Crome: he sold his pictures it is true, but at low prices, and it is only since his death that his talent has been appreciated.

We have seen that he paid many visits to London, but that he continued to reside in his native city. He was not even an exhibitor at the Royal Academy until 1806, in which year he sent two landscapes, and continued to exhibit occasionally until 1818. Yet in all these years he only contributed eight times, and the whole number of his works seen in London was only fourteen; what wonder, then, that before the age of railroads, an artist working locally in a remote angle of the kingdom seldom visited for its scenery, should achieve only a local fame.

But there were other causes besides the occupation of his time in teaching, that prevented Crome being an

exhibitor in London. He had gathered around him the artists of his native city into a little fraternity, and in February, 1803, they formed themselves into a society for their mutual benefit and improvement, and eventually for the public exhibition of their works. The society was called "The Norwich Society, for the purpose of an inquiry into the rise, progress, and present state of Painting, Architecture, and Sculpture, with a view to point out the best methods of study to attain greater perfection in these arts." It was something of the nature of a joint-stock association, since every member on his election had to contribute his proportion of the value of the property of the body. It was not confined to artists by profession, since we find in the list of members, tradesmen, clergymen, and literary men; among others, Mr. R. M. Bacon, editor and proprietor of the *Norwich Mercury*, from whose columns much of our information has been gleaned. Every member, however, prior to his election, had to submit to two tests—one of his ability, by submitting his works to the general body; the other, of his personal popularity; each member was balloted for, the votes of three-fourths of the members present being required to secure his election. The members met once a fortnight for the purpose of reading works on art, and the discussion of art topics. A subject was given out for the next evening's discussion, in order that the members might reflect upon it in the interim, and be prepared for its free discussion at the ensuing fortnightly meeting. Out of this institution arose the Norwich Exhibition of Works of Art—one of the earliest, indeed we believe the first annual exhibition of pictures in a provincial town. It was not, however, until 1805 that the artists

were sufficiently prepared for the public exhibition of their pictures; on the 6th of August in that year the "Norwich Society of Artists" opened their works to the public in the great room in Sir Benjamin Wrench's court, and Crome was naturally a large contributor. We find in the catalogue twenty-two of his pictures, and he continued until his death to be a constant supporter of the society. We learn from Mr. Wodderspoon's extracts from the *Norwich Mercury*, published in 1858, that from the first exhibition in 1805, until his death in 1821, Crome's pictures in the catalogues of the Society amounted to 196; many of them, no doubt, are sketches, some in oil, some in water-colours, some merely drawings. It is a strong indication of his love for the scenery of his native county that so few of his subjects are derived from places he visited. He made journeys to Wales and to the North of England, and we find a few pictures and sketches from Wales and the lake country. He visited Paris and the low countries, and we have three pictures from these places; but the great mass of his works are from the lanes, the heaths, the rivers and shores of his native county.

It was not Crome's practice to paint his pictures on the spot; he made drawings and sketches, and occasionally painted before Nature in water-colours; but his pictures, the result of careful study and observation of Nature, were painted in his studio. He wanted but little subject: an aged oak, a pollard willow by the side of the slow Norfolk streams, or a patch of broken ground, in his hands became pictures charming us by their sweet colour and rustic nature. Not but that he painted many subjects which are quite unworthy of him, and many

repetitions of pictures that had been popular favourites. He was very facile in his execution, painted with a full brush and very much at once; and often, under the pressure of necessity, produced slight works or repeated others, to supply an immediate demand upon him. Moreover he was fond of society, and, latterly, was apt to indulge a little too freely. He loved boating, and no doubt frequented the regattas and water frolics on the Waveney, the Yare, and the Bure; was fond of the pleasant idleness of watching the boats and boating parties as he took refreshment and repose with good companions in the Hinsby Gardens at Thorpe, and other like resorts for citizens' ruralities. His palette and canvas were often in demand to meet the wants arising from such outbreaks, and his talents as a teacher were in constant requisition. Had his art been laborious, the production of so long a list of works would have been an impossibility. The elder Mr. Bacon even says that he was through life a drawing-master, that his fine landscapes were painted in his holiday leisure, and that he was a wine-bibber and improvident, often receiving money on his unfinished works. We are told also that very many of his pictures were never exhibited at all, and that amongst such, several of his very important subjects were included.

Crome seems to have founded his art on Hobbema, Ruysdael, and the Dutch School, rather than on the French and Italian painters; except so far as these were represented by our countryman Wilson, whose works he copied, and whose influence is seen mingled with the more naturalistic treatment derived from the Dutch masters. He had less finesse of execution,

and paid less attention to details than the Dutchmen, but had a fine sense of generalized imitation. His picture of "Mousehold Heath," painted probably in 1816, is a good example of his style. It shows how very little subject has to do in producing a fine picture. A sky, a barren heath spreading away into the far distance, a bank in the foreground, with a few weeds, are all the materials the painter had to treat; but the manner of treating them has resulted in a beautiful work. The sky is very luminous, with grand rolling clouds, accidental shadows from which are thrown over the distance and the foreground, leaving the middle distance luminous, clear and cool, though rich and full of colour. A few thistles and large weeds in the foreground, and some small figures going away into the picture, complete this interesting work: interesting from its painter-like treatment, certainly not from subject. This picture has a curious history, illustrative of the art of the picture-dealer, which has been already alluded to. It was bought by some sacrilegious brother of the craft, and cut down the middle to enable him to sell it as two pictures—indeed the work was, we believe, sold separately in this state. Some more reverential possessor of pictures then repurchased and reunited them; and the picture has now found its final resting-place in our national collection.

Another fine picture by this master is "A Clump of Trees, Hautbois Common," probably that in the Norwich Society's catalogue, in 1810. This was formerly in the possession of Mr. Ellison, of Sudbrook Holme, near Lincoln, and was given by his widow, with many other British pictures, to the Fitzwilliam Gallery at Cambridge. In it the painter has shown his skill in the use of acci-

dental lights. The foreground and middle distance are in shadow, for Crome clung to the old traditions in art. A gleam of light passes through the picture, barred by the dark stems of the group of trees, and shows on the borders of the common a distant village. This picture, like many of his works, is rather one of tone than of colour, and proves the painter's full knowledge of the resources of his art. Mr. Wynn Ellis has "A Coast Scene near Yarmouth," which has some of the qualities of Turner; although the effect is more forced, and it has less of art, and is too solid in execution. A storm of the murkiest character is rising over the sea, fast covering the sky with a black shroud; one bright and silvery gleam yet uncovered, showing grand rolling cumuli touched with the last light of the sun. A lugger, with a rich gleam in its broad sail, is running into harbour; a large dismasted man-of-war lies high and dry. The work lacks the grandeur of Turner. The boat seems small and tug-like; the fishing village on the shore is mean, and wants quantity and detail; the contrasts are too violent, but the sky is nobly conceived. "Slate Quarries," the property of Mr. Fuller Maitland, is another characteristic picture by the master. It is founded on Turner's early versions of Poussin, and seems a somewhat unfinished work, yet with great local truth of colour and a fat impasto of execution. There is also one small specimen of his powers in the Sheepshanks Collection. In some of his small pictures of heath scenes and broken ground, Crome closely approximated to his Dutch prototypes. We ourselves saw one of his pictures of this class sold at Christie's as a Wynants. Yet in his more important works there is great breadth of treatment, largeness of

manner, and mastery of execution, and, in all, a fine eye for the general colour of Nature.

The Norwich Society, which had established itself successfully as a public institution of the city, continued its exhibitions until the year 1816, when a split in the body of artists caused a separation. While many continued to exhibit in the old rooms—some, under the leadership of Ladbroke, opened another exhibition in the Assembly-rooms Plain. Crome, however, remained true to the old party, and although he had of late years decreased the number of his contributions, he sent, in 1816, eighteen works to their exhibition, among them one of his few foreign pictures, "Bruges River—Ostend in the Distance—Moonlight;" the result of a visit to the Continent in the previous year. He continued to exhibit with the Society until 1821, but died on the 22nd of April in that year, previous to the opening of the exhibition. His last illness was of an inflammatory nature, and carried him off in the short space of seven days; his constitution having it is said been somewhat impaired by his early labours as a house painter. He was buried at St. George's, Norwich, and a large number of artists of his native city as well as others attended his funeral.

Crome etched many plates of the scenery of his native county, which, however, were not published until after his death, when they were issued under the title of "Norfolk Picturesque Scenery, consisting of a series of thirty-one etchings by the late John Crome, founder of the Norwich Society of Artists, and printed from plates left by him, &c. 1834." Another issue appeared in 1838, with a memoir of the painter by Mr. Dawson Turner, which contained some additional etchings, and a portrait

of Crome by D. B. Murphy, engraved by Sevier. After his death an exhibition of his works in the hands of his relatives, friends, and neighbours, took place. One hundred and eleven pictures and studies were collected, the catalogue of which will be found in Wodderspoon's brochure. Crome not only painted landscapes, which since his death have obtained increased and increasing reputation, but he may claim to be the founder of a provincial school of art at Norwich; a school with peculiar characteristics, and in some respects differing from metropolitan practice. His influence and maxims had great weight with his contemporaries and friends, and of his pupils, two at least, Stark and Vincent, deserve some notice at our hands; while his brother artist in the society, John Sell Cotman, has obtained a name both at home and abroad.

Of Crome's two pupils, *James Stark* is the best known in London. Like his master, he was a native of Norwich, born in the year 1794. He was the son of a dyer in that city, a man well to do in his trade, into which he had introduced many improvements, was much respected in his native city, and honourably mentioned by the local press at his death. Young Stark early indicated a love of art, and in 1811 was articled for three years to John Crome. He must already have obtained some proficiency, since in the same year he contributed five landscapes, in oil, to the Norwich Exhibition, and in 1812 was elected a member of the Society, exhibiting in that year several works. On the completion of his articles with Crome, young Stark came to London in 1817, entered the schools of the Royal Academy, and soon became an exhibitor at the British

Institution, where he was successful in selling his works, and even received a prize of 50*l.* from the governors. From some unexplained cause he returned to Norwich, where he settled for a time, married, and remained nearly twelve years. In 1827, he issued proposals for the publication of a work on "The Scenery of the Rivers of Norfolk;" this was completed in 1834, when, notwithstanding a good list of subscribers, it is understood that his enthusiasm in producing a work of such merit and interest led to little adequate reward. This publication gives us a good insight into the rural beauties of this somewhat neglected county—beauties that must soon pass away in this age of improvement. It does much credit to the painter's talent, and to the school of art in which he was educated. In 1830, Stark returned to London, where he remained ten years. In 1840 he went to reside at Windsor, finding many subjects for his canvas in that beautiful locality. After many years' residence there, he returned to London for the advantage of educating his son in art, and died on the 24th March, 1859, in the 60th year of his age.

Stark exhibited at Suffolk Street, with the Society of British Artists, intermittently from 1824 to 1839, and at the Royal Academy, with intervals, from 1831 to 1859, besides contributing frequently to the British Institution. His works are simple, but very truthful and unobtrusive. His "Rivers of Norfolk" give a favourable impression of his talent as an artist; the character of the local scenery is well preserved, the scenes are full of appropriate figures and incidents, and the individuality of each subject makes us feel sure of the painter's truth. Stark founded his art on the principles of Crome, and the

study of the Dutch landscape painters; but his treatment of his subject, his handling and execution are petite and mean when compared with his master's—thin, and wanting in the impasto and richness of Crome; while in seeking the quiet tone of colour of his Dutch examples he has failed to obtain their brilliancy and richness. His pictures have few faults, at the same time there is little in them to warm into enthusiasm or to awaken delight.

Of Crome's other pupil, *George Vincent*, we have very scanty information, although he is an artist of far higher powers than Stark, and does honour, or might have done, to his school and his master. He was a pupil with John Crome, about the same time as Stark, and with him first appears as a contributor to the Norwich exhibition in 1811, his works being evidently quite elementary. In 1812, he again sent two pictures, still showing a state of pupilage, since they are described in the catalogue as "after Crome." He made rapid progress from this time, in 1814 exhibiting no less than fifteen pictures. He exhibited two landscapes in the British Institution in 1817, and four in 1818, at which time he seems to have finally left Norwich to reside in London, as his direction is given—"Wells Street, Oxford Street." In 1820, we find him contributing to the Exhibition of the Society of Painters in Water Colours, "London from the Surrey Side of Waterloo Bridge." (The society had thrown open its exhibition to others than members, and did not confine itself to works in water colours.) The picture, we believe, was afterwards in Lord de Tabley's collection. But the work which places him very high as an artist, and shows that he would have proved a worthy rival of the great landscape

painters of his day, had he persevered in his course, is the picture of "Greenwich Hospital," now or lately the property of Mr. Fordham of Stourton Castle, who purchased it at the sale of the pictures of the late Mr. Wadmore.

Mr. Carpenter, the esteemed keeper of the print-room in the British Museum, relates that some papers in the possession of Mr. Wadmore were necessary to the completion of a work he was at that time publishing, and in negotiating to obtain them, Mr. Wadmore agreed to part with them on condition that Mr. C. should give Vincent a commission for a picture at the price of a hundred guineas, without, however, mentioning its destination, and that this picture should be the price of the manuscripts. Vincent executed his work thoroughly, giving all his powers to the task, and all parties were well satisfied. The subject chosen is the hospital as seen from the river, the sun being in the picture. The river at full tide is crowded with craft and shipping, the sky pearly and luminous, the sun obscured by the vessels, and the light dispersed. When again seen in the International Exhibition of 1862, this fine picture was greatly appreciated for its talent and art. Latterly, Vincent painted subjects seen under the sun, as did Constable, but his treatment was wholly different; broad masses of greyish shadow were tipped and fringed with the solar rays.

Soon after the date of the "Greenwich Hospital" picture, Vincent fell into bad habits and money difficulties; his pictures were to be seen in the shop windows of dealers, and gradually became more slight and less studied. He had married a daughter of Dr. Cunoni,

and furnished a good house at Kentish Town, but when he fell into difficulties he was gradually lost sight of by the art world. The time of his death is unknown; his widow afterwards married Mr. Murphy, a writer for the public press.

John Sell Cotman, another of the friends and associates of Crome, and one who has won for himself a reputation in art far more than local, was born in Norwich about the year 1782. He was the son of a linendraper who carried on his business in London Lane, and sent his boy to be educated at the Norwich Free Grammar School, when Dr. Forster, who afterwards became the first vice-president of the "Norwich Society," was principal. On leaving school young Cotman evinced a great love for art, much it is said to the annoyance of his father, who wished the good-looking youth to take his place behind the counter and follow him as a draper. We have little account as to the early life of young Cotman; but have been informed by Miss Turner, the daughter of Dawson Turner who was associated with Cotman in several of his works, that much of the artist's early life was spent in London, studying design, in company with Turner, Girtin, and Munn, and that with them he used to frequent the well-known meetings at the house of Dr. Munro—whence so many artists who afterwards reached the goal of excellence, made their first start in the race of art.

Cotman must have returned to Norwich soon after the foundation of the Norwich Society of Artists, which he joined in 1807. He then styled himself a portrait painter; and in 1808, when he contributed no less than sixty-seven pictures to the exhibition, several of them

were portraits; while others were in that class of art in which he afterwards became so distinguished. Cotman married early, and soon learnt that neither portrait nor landscape painting yielded him sufficient means to maintain his increasing family. He therefore found it necessary to become a drawing-master; and being a young man of very gentlemanly appearance and agreeable manners, was welcomed at the houses of the surrounding gentry, whose children he taught, and whose parks and houses he sketched and painted; and from the study of whose pictures he drew knowledge and pleasure. He left Norwich and settled at Yarmouth, where, in the capacity of drawing-master, he made the acquaintance of Mr. Dawson Turner, and taught his children.

As all the early water-colour art arose out of the practice of the antiquarian draughtsmen, the painters at the beginning of the century were still imbued with somewhat of the spirit. Dawson Turner found in Cotman a congenial worker, and soon began to concert with him works illustrative of his own antiquarian pursuits. In 1811, Cotman commenced publishing a series of etchings of "The Architectural Antiquities of Norfolk," and "Engravings of the Sepulchral Brasses." In 1817 he accompanied Mr. and Mrs. Turner, and their three daughters, on a tour in Normandy, which country he again visited in 1818 and in 1820; and the result was a work in two folio volumes, written by Dawson Turner, and illustrated by Cotman, called *Architectural Antiquities of Normandy*, published in 1822. In 1825, although still continuing to reside in Norwich, where he had again returned, he appears as an associate exhibitor of the London Society of Painters

in Water Colours, contributing to their exhibition continually until 1839. Obtaining the appointment of drawing-master in King's College School, he removed to London about the year 1834, and resided in Hunter Street, Brunswick Square. Here his health began to decline. He was afflicted with severe nervous depression, which gradually terminated in mental aberration, and his death took place on the 28th of July, 1842, at the age of sixty.

Cotman not only painted in water colours, but in oil also; in this medium, however, he was hardly successful, and his works are solid and heavy. As a painter in water colours he adopted a manner of his own, somewhat derived, perhaps, from the art of Turner, but without his refinement. He was a master of the principles of light and shade, but at times made his knowledge too obvious. His masses of light and dark were broad and simple; and he managed to indicate with little labour the smaller forms in the masses without losing breadth in his lights, or leaving his shadows sombre and obscure. His smaller forms were sometimes added with the reed pen. There was but little of literal imitation in his pictures, which latterly became mannered, and showed a want of renewed reference to Nature. His mode of treating his subject was well suited to advance his pupils; to enable them to see Nature as a whole, capable of being easily rendered on the reduced scale usually attempted in water colours. One of his critics said justly that "he had the happy and unusual gift of converting the dryest architectural subjects into pictures by an artist-like disposition of the light and shade, by the arrangement of subordinate objects, and by the

pleasing introduction of accessories." His figures are generally well-placed, and carry brilliant spots of light or colour into the dark parts of his picture. He was, above all things, ready with his pencil: it shows through all his colour; it supplies the detail and drawing of his architecture, giving its sharp angles or its mouldering decay, and when used without colour, giving the masses of dark, the greys, and almost the colour of his subject; yet in colour itself he was defective, and merged all the finesse of broken tints and of gradations in the broad hue of sunlight or shadow. His architectural works led the way to the pictorial study of the Norman towns, and the rich and picturesque structures with which they abound.

It remains for us to add a few words on the Norwich Society of which these men were members. While those who still remained true to the old society, Crome among the number, continued in their old premises in Wrench's Court, the seceders who formed the new society in 1816, did not long maintain it; not that they deemed it a new society, for their first exhibition in 1816 was called the twelfth, the last, apparently, in 1818 being named the fourteenth. Nor is it to be wondered at that it was unsuccessful. Norwich citizens and Norfolk gentry did little for the arts, if we may judge from the circular of the old society when it also was removed to Exchange Street. "They had taken upon themselves," they say, "a responsibility equal to about 200*l.* per annum, for the charges incidental to their exhibition, in the conviction that the taste of the county and city would not be backward to assist their efforts for the promotion of art." But their hopes were unfounded.

Norwich might support a few portrait painters, and require the services of some score of drawing-masters, but patrons and purchasers of pictures did not abound; a local historian records "that since their establishment the Norwich Society of Artists have exhibited about 4,600 pictures, the production of no fewer than 323 individuals, while scarcely a single picture has been bought in the Norwich rooms; and the receipts at the door have never amounted to a sum sufficient to meet the expenses." After Crome's death, and Stark's and Cotman's removal to London, the exhibition ceased to be mainly supported by artists of the Norwich School, but was largely supplemented, as are those in other provincial towns, by works of metropolitan artists who are invited to contribute; and the Norwich School as a peculiar provincial school ceased to exist.

CHAPTER XI.

THE LANDSCAPE PAINTERS—CONSTABLE, CALLCOTT, AND COLLINS.

John Constable, R.A.—His Birth and Parentage—Decides to be a Painter—His truly English Art—And original Manner—Seizes the peculiar Characteristics of our Scenery—Truthfulness of his Pictures—Effect of his own Manner of Painting under the Sun—His Maxims—Our English Scenery described—The Source of his Inspiration—His Execution and Manner of Painting—Pre-Raphaelitism—Defects of mere Imitative Art—His early and later Manner contrasted—The Painter's Materials poor Substitutes for imitating Nature—Constable tried great breadth of Treatment—Abandoned the Practice of Painting direct from Nature—Description of his studied Sketches—His Appreciation of the Old Masters—Visitorship at the Royal Academy—His Character and his Art—Death—*Augustus Wall Callcott, R.A.*—His Boyhood and bringing up—Turns Artist—Becomes Student at the Academy—And Pupil of Hoppner—Tries Portraiture—Finds his true bent in Landscape—Elected R.A.—Contributes largely to the Exhibition—Then restricts himself to one Picture yearly—Attains a high Reputation—Varley's astrological Prediction—He Marries—Travels in Italy—His Popularity and Success—Knighted—His Raphael and the Fornarina—Opinion upon this Work—Recollections of him and of Lady Callcott—His "Milton dictating *Paradise Lost* to his Daughters"—Loss of Health—And failing Powers—Appointed Surveyor of the Crown Pictures—Death—*William Collins, R.A.*—Birth—Begins Life in Art—His first Studies—Admitted to Morland's Painting-room—Influence of Morland's Art—Student of the Academy—Exhibits his first Picture—His Industry—And Art-friendships—Paints Landscapes with Figures—Makes Progress but slowly—His Works become popular—The "Sale of the Pet Lamb"—Subject described—Elected Associate—His Difficulties—Tries Coast Scenes—Gains high Patronage—His "Sunday Morning" and "Happy as a King"—Visits Italy—But does not add to his Reputation—Death—His Art—His Manner of Painting and Materials—Choice of Subjects.

TURNER, of whom we have already spoken, was not without contemporaries, distinguished men practising the same branch of art, yet in a manner quite their own, and

aiming at original excellence. Of these *John Constable, R.A.*, was remarkable as the first who wholly emancipated himself from the schools. In his works we find no leaning to Dutch, French, or Italian art. His art is purely and thoroughly English—English in subject, English in feeling, English in treatment and execution. Turner, in his early works at least, built much on the art of Claude and Poussin; so did Callcott. Gainsborough, English as he was in almost every phase of his art, was not clear of the dark masters and the "brown tree" school. Morland was a Dutchman in subject, and in the mode of composing his pictures. Crome built upon Ruysdael and Hobbema. But Constable began with studying Nature; he was ever deep in the love of it, and ended as he began. His nature, too, was English nature; he never visited Italy; he did not even care for the mountain and the torrent of his own land, but loved the flat pastures and slow streams of his native Suffolk. The utmost south to him was Salisbury; in its grey cathedral and rippling water he found subjects that suited his art far better than the wild campagna of the seven-hilled city, or the palaces that surround the enchanted bay.

Constable was born at East Bergholt, Suffolk, on the 11th June, 1776. He was the son of a wealthy miller, who had inherited considerable property. He was first intended for the Church. Then his father tried to make a miller of him, but he had a loving preference for art, and after a year he was left to follow his own bent. In 1795 he came to London. In 1799 he was admitted a student of the Royal Academy; and in 1802 we find him exhibiting his first picture. Soon gaining confidence in his own powers, he wrote in the following year, "I feel now

more than ever a decided conviction that I shall some time or other make some good pictures, pictures that shall be valuable to posterity if I do not reap the benefit of them." He made one or two attempts at history, then lost much time in painting portraits, the only art which he found paid, and at last settled down to his true art, as a landscape painter. In 1819 he gained his election as associate, and ten years later his full membership.

The banks of the Stour made him, he owns, a painter. He treated the Nature which he saw in a thoroughly original manner, and chose it under an aspect that had previously been overlooked. Landscape painters had hitherto usually painted with the sun at their backs, to the right, or to the left, out of the picture, looking to the landscape as the sun looks on it. But Constable took another view; he loved to see his subject *under* the sun. Many had painted the sun *in* the picture gradually sinking in the low horizon, and casting a dreamy mist and glow over all the earth. Such treatments Claude loved and painted finely; Cuyp also loved them, and gave them with unequalled breadth and beauty. And Turner also loved to paint such, advancing a step beyond either of his great forerunners. But Constable chose the time when the sun was high in the heavens, far above, out of his canvas, but still in front of him, and painted almost always under the sun; and much that is peculiar in his art arose from this cause.

Moreover, he fully appreciated the special characteristics of the English climate of our sea-surrounded land; its moisture causing all that wealth of foliage unknown elsewhere, that lovely verdure which foreigners so deeply

admire and wonder at. Its breezy freshness delighted him, the rolling clouds drifting tender showers over the rich meadows, and giving those accidental gleams of light mingled with shade so lovely to watch, as their shadows slowly float over hill and plain. He never thought nature *too green*, nor left the full foliage of summer for the brown tints of sun-dried autumn. Was not England above all things green; was it not so distinguished from other lands? So he thought, and so he ever painted.

Thus his skies were generally masses of warm grey clouds rounded off with edges of silver; here and there a rift opening through them into the blue depths of heaven beyond. Such skies he loved and painted in preference to the calm and cloudless; he knew that they produced those flying shadows and contrasts of warm sunbeams and cool greys, of deep blue under the emerald foliage, which he felt to be the character of our scenery. But his greatest peculiarity in the eyes of his critics arose more particularly from the habit he had adopted of painting *under the sun*—that glitter and sparkle of white lights on his foliage, which by those who had never observed Nature, or who had no eyes to read her aright, was nicknamed "Constable's snow"—was laughed at as spotty, and ever treated with ridicule by those who loved the patina of brown pictures, and in whose eyes all freshness was a sin against both taste and truth. It is told of Chantrey—who, as having begun art as a landscape painter, ought to have had some sense of Nature—that he took the brush out of our painter's hands on one of the varnishing days, and as poor Constable said, "brushed away all his dew;" passed a dirty brown glaze over all his truthful

sparkle to tone it down to the dull hue of conventional *truth*. And his friend Leslie, speaking of his fine picture "The Opening of Waterloo Bridge," says, "What would he have felt could he foresee that in little more than a year after his death, its silvery brightness was doomed to be clouded over by a coat of blacking, laid on by the hand of a picture dealer; yet that this was done by way of giving tone to the picture, I know from the best authority, the lips of the operator; who assured me that several noblemen considered it to be greatly improved by the process. The blacking was laid on with water, and secured by a coat of mastic varnish."

Now, to convince oneself of the true and original view of Nature that Constable took, it is only necessary to look at Nature as he did, and we shall find these white high lights, this sparkle and glitter, to be the very characteristics of sun-light. All leaves that have a polished, or semi-polished surface, such as the holly, the walnut, the Spanish chestnut—indeed all leaves more or less—when not grimed with smoke, or foul with dust, are fitted to reflect light, and when so seen between the sun and the spectator do, like mirrors, reflect light from their surface—rays of crystal as from bright jewels, which can only be represented, if at all, by pure white. Still more do they sparkle and glitter when the dew of morning, or the freshness of summer showers is upon them, and this Constable as a painter was the first to treat. This original view of Nature led him to depict many other beauties, which he rendered most truthfully: thus, seen under the sun, the shadows are broad and liquid, with fulness of rich colour in them; at the edges of trees the true local colour in all its fulness

is found, while in other parts where the sun-rays pass through the thinner foliage, the colour is enriched by transmission, as it is through stained glass, and is in vivid contrast with the full shadows. But this is never the case opposite the sun, where the colour is modified and somewhat neutralized by the reflected grey or blue of the heavens. Even in the broad masses of the nearer foreground, as seen under the sun, there is somewhat of transmission through the waving blades of grass and the weedy herbage, in which the painter revelled, adding to the sense of colour and fulness; while the bright glitter and sparkle of the japonica leaves, of the dewdrops, or of the shower, enrich it still further by contrast, and refresh by the variety they give. When points of pure colour arise from flowering weeds, how jewel-like are they with the transmitted light through their bright petals; the mallow or the field-poppy burn as it were, and sparkle in the ray. All this the painter has felt, and much more, has taught us to feel also; but it required a generation to do so—a generation of ignorance to pass away, a new and more Nature-loving generation to arise. The brown-fiddle school did not appreciate him; the lovers of smoke-dried masters could not see any merit in him. Fuseli, whose pictures are, as to colour, but honey and treacle, could see in him nothing but a painter of watery skies and coming showers, and thought it witty to call to the Academy porter, "Stroulger, bring me my umbrella, I am going to see Mr. Constable's pictures."

Thus we have seen that he was original in his mode of viewing Nature—inventing, as it were, the practice of painting under the sun when that luminary is high in the heavens; inventing—ay, truly inventing,—so clearly

inventing a new method of seeing Nature that, were patents granted in art, he might have described his invention for a patent. It has also been said that he was one of the first landscape painters to emancipate himself wholly from the influence of foreign schools; and a glance at his pictures, his "Salisbury Cathedral," now belonging to Mr. S. Ashton of Manchester, his "Hay-wain," now belonging to Mr. C. Young of Ryde, his "Jumping Horse," his "Flatford Mill," "Dell in Helmington Park," or any of his *bits* of "Hampstead Heath," will show how little he adhered to the recipe "composition" school. He was satirical by nature, and could justly be so on the connoisseurs who asked, "Where is your brown tree?" or who would lay down rules of what "foregrounds should or should not be." He well knew what they should be; that they should be carefully studied from nature; that water-weeds should grow on the banks of his streams, and not on high uplands; that each plant had a separate individuality, characteristics different from all other plants; and that weedage should not be done to pattern, as was rather too much the case even with Claude. He was accustomed to say, "Paint your foreground well and truly, and the middle distance will take care of itself," showing at least how much he valued his foreground. To him painting was wholly a matter of feeling, not of rule; he was heard to lament after a visit from one of the tribe of small critics, who had assured him that *this* was wrong and *that* against all rule, that he wanted a tree here, a light there, and changes everywhere —"Ah! there is my day's painting done; that little fellow with his cockettyhoop manner, has taken away all my feeling." Then, again, he was entirely English in the

subjects he chose—locally English, no doubt, but still purely English. Look at any or all of his pictures and see how England rises before us—England in all her wealth of picturesque beauty — not "trimmed and frounced," not clipped and cropped as the corn-manufacturers disfigure her; but English nature as it holds its own in our rude heaths and ferny commons, and as it reasserts itself in every forsaken nook or neglected corner where, left alone awhile, it breaks loose from the bonds of cultivation, and bursts into a wild weedage of teazle and burdock, a rich growth of foliage and wild flowers such as few other lands can boast.

Our scenery is picturesque and strangely contrasted; nowhere more contrasted than in the neighbourhood of the monster city. There a population of thousands, nay, of millions, are in close contiguity to vast spaces of uncultivated land, open and undivided, thinly populated by the labouring poor; yet now, alas! disappearing before the greed of enclosure. Tangled heaths and bare commons, stretching even to the far-away sea, interchange at intervals with fields of waving corn parted off by wild hedgerows sweet with the May-flower in its month, with the honeysuckle and the rose in their season. Ever and again the wooded park with its noble trees, and rich pastures where the cattle graze at their leisure or ruminate idly in the shallow rippling stream, is succeeded by the marshy moor with its reedy canal, over whose sluggish waters "slow barges heavy trailed" (the halyer seated sideways on his horse), wind through the land; leaving behind the fleck of blue smoke from the low chimney, drifting athwart the dark woods that clothe the sides of the distant hills. Bordering the moor and the

marsh, the heath and the common, are the grey cottages of the tillers of the soil, the hoary thatch capped with deep green velvet moss; the few sheep, the straggling geese, the village asses, tenants of the waste, add to the picturesque; here and there a winding road, deep and rutty, barred with green stripes between horse-track and wheel-ruts, leads to the distant windmill on the uplands, whose sails turn slowly in the summer breeze that waves the feathery bracken and shimmers away over the heaven-blue waters.

Such is our English pastoral scenery; such Constable played in in his infancy, and painted in his manhood. How totally different from what Claude saw and painted —his broad campagna with its ruined aqueducts, his olive-clothed slopes and remains of classic cities; or to Poussin's castles and chestnut forests, and the wild ravines of the Alban Hills; or even to Hobbema with his brown stunted oaks; or Ruysdael with his fir forests and his cascades! Not that it is desired to set Constable in contrast with the art of these great painters, but to indicate the different scenery of his choice.

Free from the shackles of the schools, Constable was free also to choose his own mode of execution. With him the tool was nothing, nor the workmanship, but only the effect produced. There was on his part no wish to astonish by eccentricity of execution—like the painter in Queen Elizabeth's day, who, affecting to find painting with his fingers too easy, took to working with his toes—but simply as setting up feeling and truth above labour and execution. He mostly laid in his works with the palette knife, thus obtaining great flatness and breadth of touch; and avoiding all littleness

of execution and attention to mere details, he was enabled to treat the general truths of Nature as to colour and chiaroscuro largely and simply. A minor beauty arising from this practice was the full purity of white or other solid pigments, or tints mixed with them, as left by the flat knife, unchanged in the slightest degree by the greyness occasioned by the texture of brush-marks.

What he really sought, however, was the thorough abstraction of his attention from details, to concentrate his whole feeling on the general effect of Nature; to allow his memory to recall those deep impressions of beauty, often most evanescent and transient, but which, as delighting the painter, it is his peculiar province to produce for the delight of others. Constable's practice thus wholly differed from the new school of landscape painting which arose out of what is called pre-Raphaelism. That system inculcates the exact and literal imitation of parts, gradually merging them into a whole; while Constable viewed his work from the first as a whole, afterwards adding just sufficient detail to give truth of form without destroying the higher qualities arising from generalization. The new system is admirably adapted for study, for the early practice of the young painter; but really fine art, such as the art of Turner, of Gainsborough, of Wilson, of Claude, or of Cuyp, will never be achieved if literal imitation becomes the end instead of the means. Mere imitation, bit by bit, is certain to produce works less like Nature than when its general expression is sought after. Not only are there numerous transient effects, which can only be reproduced by an act of memory; such as the storm and the cloud shadow

passing over the long-distant ranges, the rainbow, the fleeting glories of sunset and sunrise, but even the momently changing of the sun in his daily round alters the light and shade and changes the colours; so that if he who proceeds by imitation does not subordinate his imitation to a preconceived idea or poetical feeling, it must be a medley of incongruous parts; and if he does, he is only doing by a compromise what was the master-principle of the older painters. That Constable was capable of exact and literal imitation, of working out of doors direct from Nature, is shown in various of his early works. "A View of Hampstead Heath," No. 36, in the Sheepshanks Collection at South Kensington, is an excellent example. It is a minute and careful study, painted on the spot, and is as perfect in its handling as any work of the new school. That he deliberately and from judgment chose to work from studies and from memory in his studio, must be inferred from his having abandoned the practice of out-door painting and adopted the other method. A contrasting example to the one just named will be found in No. 35, also "A View of Hampstead Heath," wherein the general treatment he latterly adopted, and all the peculiarities of execution he delighted in, may be compared with the imitative method. In this the details are suppressed, and breadth of colour and light and shade sought after; and it will be allowed that for freshness, a prevailing sense of daylight, and for richness of colour, it is of the two far the finer work.

Painting is, and must be, a sacrifice of less significant truths in order to obtain truth as a whole. How can we, with our poor pigments, represent the luminousness and the infinite gradations seen in Nature,

either of light and dark or of colour? Black and white, for instance—the pigments which represent for us the extremes of light and darkness—what relation has white paint, seen in the subdued light of room or gallery, where pictures must be seen, to the bright light on the rolling cumulus in the summer heavens; let alone the sun, the source of light, or its reflection on stream or from polished surfaces? or black, to that intensity of darkness when from sunny daylight we look into some deep cavernous gloom? The same may be said of all the pigments which represent colour; they are but sorry substitutes for Nature's hues, played upon by every varying sunbeam, and changing in every breeze—the light sometimes reflected from, sometimes transmitted through leaves and petals, subdued by greys, and by infinite reflections from cloud or sky; while the artist's gradations can only be obtained by degrading his colours into tints with white, or diluting them with a changing and changeable medium. The infinite gradations that exist in Nature are almost unattainable in art; so refined and delicate are they that the coarse media of pigments and varnishes cannot produce them. Look at our English skies in a hazy summer noon, when there is little wind, and the firmament is covered with fleecy clouds; or at the distant mountains seen under the same influence, when every ravine, every rock and boulder and stunted tree, may be seen miles away, marked and distinct to the eye, with gradations so infinitely tender and delicate that they are all included in one haze of blue! What pigments, what execution will render such delicate transitions? Certainly not the crude colours at our command, or the oil vehicles with which we

temper them. Hence the painter has to substitute other truths, and resorts to "breadth," whereby he masses the parts and loses the gradations; suppressing details, he makes the general colour of the mass to include the many minor forms and hues which his limited means prevent him from producing with adequate truth. For such as are important to retain he reserves his palette; refusing for awhile to avail himself even of the full purity of the pigments he has at his command, in order that he may have means, by enhancing points of light or of colour higher, purer, and brighter than the rest, to make some object of interest sparkle and glow on the spectator's eye.

Again, reduction in size compels the painter to the same expedients. Objects in Nature that tell palpably in the eye, are, when reduced to the relative scale of our picture, so microscopically small, that we must either unduly enlarge them, or suppress them, and seek compensation in that "breadth" which includes them. In working direct from Nature these minute beauties enchant us; telling on the eye of the painter, he can hardly avoid the endeavour to imitate them, and thus the whole is sacrificed to the parts. It must be remembered, also, that what may appear to the painter, when in face of Nature, almost faithful imitation of the scene before him, becomes tame and changed when his work is brought into the subdued light of his own room. It is said that the Dutch painters of candle-light effects wrought by daylight, looking through a small aperture into a room where their subject was seen illuminated by candle-light. Now, whether true or not, this is the effect to be obtained—the candle-light must appear to

be candle-light when seen by daylight; and the sunny landscape must not merely be bright and glowing when the painter is on the field of his out-of-door labours, but must bring the sun and the glow of daylight into our rooms: and as every painter must be aware of the change that takes place when out-of-door work is seen in-doors, he will be aware that some treatment must be adopted to insure that his work when seen in-doors shall have the effect of out of doors.

All these considerations, joined, no doubt, to a fine perception of truth and an accurate memory of form and colour, led Constable to forego painting direct from Nature, which he was so well qualified to excel in, and to form instead, a style and manner built on careful studies; by which he was better enabled to place before us all those large truths of landscape scenery, which had impressed him with their poetry and beauty, and thoroughly to enable us for all time to enjoy them through him.

There are in the possession of Mr. H. Vaughan, of Cumberland Terrace, Regent's Park, commencements for two of Constable's pictures, which are invaluable, not only for their intrinsic qualities, but as illustrations of his mode of conducting his pictures. They are studies for "The Hay-wain," one of his finest works, the property of C. Young, Esq., of Ryde; and for "The Jumping Horse," sometimes called "The Canal," exhibited in 1825. The canvases are the size of the completed works. The subjects are laid in with the knife, with great breadth and in a grand and large manner. Various glazings have then been passed over the parts, to bring together and enrich them (even the skies are glazed); and then

the whole has again had enhancing points of colour added, and brightness and daylight obtained by further draggings and knife touches. With the exception of the glazings, it would seem as if the brush had not been used upon them; hence there is a complete absence of any sort of detail. In "The Jumping Horse"—perhaps the finer of the two studies—are several figures in a boat on the canal; they are in shadow, and are merely flat masses of grey; the chestnut horse jumping the bar of the lock, with his red-waistcoated rider, are mere blots of colour, yet of the purest local truth. The trees are masses of green, with grand, simple, grey branches, but no indications of leafage. Viewed at a distance, the scheme of the picture is complete, the local truth of colour beautifully felt, and the freshness and daylight are startling.

When Constable had carried his study thus far, and was pleased with the indications it contained, he would leave it without further completion, perhaps fearing to lose what he was so satisfied with—for it must be confessed that Constable was a man who had sufficient self-esteem, in the language of the phrenologists, to think well of his own works—he would leave it without completion, and commence again on a new canvas, endeavouring to retain the fine qualities of the studied sketch, adding to it such an amount of completeness and detail as could be given without loss of the higher qualities of breadth and general truth. How completely this was effected would be at once seen by comparing the incomplete with the completed work. There was an opportunity for doing this during the International Exhibition of 1862, when Mr. Vaughan's studies were hung for a time

on loan in the Sheepshanks Collection, and Mr. Young's pictures were in the adjacent gallery. It was a lesson that might be most valuable to young artists if they could read it aright, and to the despisers of the method followed by the older masters of our school. Constable himself knew the value of such studies, for he rarely parted with them. He used to say of his studies and pictures that he had no objection to part with the corn, but not with the field that grew it. Since his death, however, several of these studies have been dispersed. A fine one for "The Lock" is in the possession of Mr. W. Bashall, of Farington Park, Preston.

Because Constable despised the painters who were content to see Nature only through the eyes of others, it must not be presumed that he did not feel the merits of the great painters among the old masters, or was untouched by the beauty of their works. He was a great admirer of all that was truly good in landscape art; he made studies from Ruysdael's pictures, pointing out their merits with great delight, and the power of observation they evinced. Even the landscape art of the higher schools was fully appreciated by him; and one of his latest labours was lecturing upon the beauties of the landscape of Titian's Peter Martyr.

Moreover, it is rather contrary to the usual practice of the Royal Academy that a landscape painter should be a visitor in the life-school, but at Constable's desire he was elected to that office. He selected for study some of the finest figures from Raphael, and from Michael Angelo's Sistine Chapel, and posed the models in the life-school in like attitudes; an excellent mode of study, enabling the students to see how these great masters had treated nature.

Among other figures, he placed one in the attitude of a well-known Eve, and thought it would be useful to the students to contrast the flesh with real foliage. Accordingly he had a large laurel bush cut down from his garden at Hampstead, to stand in the place of the tree of knowledge. Unfortunately (as his visitorship was just at Christmas time), the man employed to convey it to Somerset House was seized by the police as a garden robber, who had stolen the tree for Christmas decorations; and notwithstanding his protestations, both he and the tree were carried to the station-house, which Constable had to visit in order to redeem them from durance. Finally, the bush with a few oranges tied on to give colour, and to represent the forbidden fruit, did service as a support to the female representative of Eve; much to the satisfaction of the students, and the gratification of Etty's love of colour, who, as usual, was at his post on this occasion.

Constable has been most fortunate in his biographer, but Leslie has painted him *couleur de rose*, and transfused his own kindly and simple spirit into the biography. The landscape painter, though of a manly nature, was eminently sarcastic, and very clever at saying the bitterest things in a witty manner. This had no doubt been increased by the neglect with which the would-be connoisseurs had treated his art, and the sneers of commonplace critics. He may be said to have been born a little too early; before the time when Nature was appreciated rather than pictures, and within the period when Dutch finish was thought indispensable to a fine work. Yet he certainly was the forerunner of the race of artists who, about the period of his mid-career, began to rely

upon their own impressions of Nature in the treatment of their subjects, and to reject the traditional dogmas of art. There can be no doubt that Constable had great influence on the landscape art, both of his own country and of France, inducing much of that candid acceptance of Nature, as contradistinguished from *compositions*, which some of the artists who succeeded him here, affect to follow even too minutely. Yet his peculiar treatment of his subject has not been followed up by any. One painter only of his own time, whether from original observation, or following in Constable's footsteps, adopted the same practice; this was George Vincent, of whom we have already spoken, who almost invariably practised painting "under the sun." As to Constable's influence on French art, arising from the picture of "The Hay-wain," which he sent in 1824 to the Paris Exhibition, and for which he was honoured with a gold medal, it is acknowledged even by their own art critics; and there is no doubt that the school of which Troyon was so able a representative, was initiated by the admiration these fine works obtained. Constable's influence upon Leslie and his art has been spoken of in the account of that painter's works.

Constable died in Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square, on the 1st of April, 1837. He had worked hard for appreciation and fame, and it must have been with pain that he said of himself in reference to his work engraving by Lucas—"The painter himself is totally unpopular, and will be so on this side of the grave; the subjects nothing but art, and the buyers wholly ignorant of that." Again—"My art flatters nobody by imitation, it courts nobody by smoothness, it tickles nobody by petiteness, it is

without either fal-de-lal or fiddle-de-dee: how can I therefore hope to be popular?" But his conviction that his works would be valued by posterity soon found its fulfilment. His friends purchased his fine work, "The Cornfield," and presented it to the National Gallery. A better feeling for his art at once arose, and his pictures are now treasured in all collections, and prized to their worth.

His competitor, Callcott, passed through life side by side with him, exhibiting from year to year with him on the walls of the Academy, but with what different success; fashion favoured the one and turned her back upon the other. The one was in his day the popular favourite, the other unknown and neglected. Now, if we had to adjudge the precedence, it would be given to the purely original English art of John Constable.

Augustus Wall Callcott, R.A., was born on the 20th of February, 1779, in the quiet suburb of Kensington Gravel Pits, not as now abounding with art and artists, but a rural neighbourhood separated from London by green-fields and workmen's villages, by the parks and gardens, in our day so trim and well-frequented, but then neglected and run to waste—the park stocked with deer, the gardens tangled and unhealthy; but from which "dogs and livery servants" were rigorously excluded. Callcott's family had resided long in the neighbourhood; his elder brother had adopted the profession of music, in which art he developed rare genius, and became the celebrated Dr. Callcott. He had studied under Dr. Cooke, at Westminster, and his younger brother, the future artist, was in his boyhood a chorister in the Abbey, until his voice broke, and his desire for art outweighed his love of music. In 1797, he was admitted a student of the

Royal Academy, and became for a time a pupil of Hoppner the painter, then in the zenith of his professional career. Following the direction of his studies he began life as a portrait painter, and we find him exhibiting in 1799, for the first time, a "Portrait of Miss Roberts," and again appearing as a portrait painter in 1801. In 1802, he exhibited a portrait of Dr. Gray, the father of the distinguished naturalist, Dr. Gray of the British Museum; it is now in the Royal Society, and is a work of much merit for so young a painter. But Callcott's natural bent was evidently in another direction. In the same year he exhibited five landscapes; and landscape art constituted the labour of his life until a late period of his career.

In 1804 he was not an exhibitor, but in the five following years he contributed twenty landscapes, which showed such increasing merit that in 1806 he was elected an associate of the Royal Academy, and in 1810 a full member; in which year he again exhibited a single portrait. His presentation picture, "Morning," will give us a good insight into his art at this period. It is a vigorous and manly production, painted with a full pencil and much impasto, in a crisp, large, flat manner. It has great freshness, and is far removed from the over-laboured tameness of his later works. "The Old Pier at Littlehampton," painted in 1812, and now in the Vernon collection (No. 345), is a picture of less merit, but is a proof of his early adoption of a quiet, prevailing tone in his landscapes, rather than seeking for colour; a principle which, modified by the nature of the work, continued to be characteristic of his landscape and figure subjects to the end.

In 1811, the year after his election, he exhibited ten landscapes, and in 1812 six; but whether it had been whispered to him that his art was not up to his early promise, or that with his sound judgment he felt such to be the case; or, it may be, struck with the grand works of Turner, or the rising talent of Constable, he seems from this time to have determined to limit his appearance in public. For the two next years he exhibited nothing, and thenceforth, for the next twelve years, put all his strength into a single picture for the annual exhibitions. During this period he painted his finest pictures and undoubtedly raised his reputation to the first rank. His best works were mostly English landscapes; "The Entrance to the Pool of London," exhibited in the Royal Academy, in 1816, and "The Mouth of the Tyne," in 1818, both of which were in the International Exhibition of 1861, are evidences of his claim to this distinction; they had an individuality of their own, and showed an appreciation of English atmosphere and English scenery not to be found in the works of his later years.

Callcott and Mulready were neighbours from early times, and being seven years the elder, Callcott was a little looked up to by his junior. Varley also was intimate with them. A curious story used to be told among the members of Callcott's family, and during the life-time of both parties, relating to Varley's practice of, and belief in astrology. Varley asked Callcott to give him his exact age, and having obtained it, cast his nativity, sealed it up and gave it to Mulready, charging him to keep it safely until Callcott was fifty years old. The paper, it is said, was laid aside and forgotten until Callcott, then in his

fiftieth year, wrote to Mulready, to invite him to his wedding, which was about to take place with Mrs. Graham, the widow of Captain Graham. Mulready recollected Varley's sealed paper and his injunction, and took the document with him, opening it in the presence of the assembled company; the contents ran thus—"Callcott will remain single until he is fifty, and then will marry and go to Italy." As the painter really was to make a trip, shortly after his wedding, to that country, it was thought a wonderful coincidence. Over and over again have we heard this tale told, with many other of Varley's wild fancies; but if our dates are accurate, Callcott was married on the 20th February, 1827, his forty-eighth birthday, and started for Italy on the 12th of May following, so that we have a false date, or Varley made a false prediction. This was Callcott's first journey to Italy, but he had previously been in Paris and in Holland.

On Callcott's return from Italy in June, 1828, he seems to have entirely changed his views as to exhibiting; perhaps it was necessary, as he was now married, to provide for a larger establishment. His wife also assisted with her pen; and her work on early Italian painters added to her husband's reputation from his pencil. His studio in "The Mall" was frequented by the titled and the rich; his art became fashionable; the painter himself was courteous and somewhat of a courtier—far different from his great competitor, Turner. His pictures, bright, pleasant of surface, and finished in execution, were suited to the appreciation of his public, and not beyond their comprehension; commissions poured in upon him. In the week before the pictures were sent into the Academy,

the occupants of lines of carriages usually waited their turn to be admitted to see his works before they left the painter's easel. Instead of the one picture of rare excellence which he had formerly shown as the public pledge of his improvement, he began to send the full number allowed by the Academy laws; instead of the careful study of Nature and Nature's effects, which he made with a view to perfect such works, he began to rely on sketches and on his memory—to rely on his art-knowledge, his composition, his sweet execution; and his works increased in art, or what is called art, and decreased in Nature.

In 1837, on the accession of her Majesty, he received the honour of knighthood, and this year, reverting rather to his early art, he sent to the Academy a picture of "Raphael and the Fornarina," the figures life-size, the whole finished with the careful execution of a cabinet picture. When again exhibited in 1864, at the British Institution, it looked much as it did when it left the artist's studio. Callcott himself used to say—"A bad picture never did crack," and his, as to surface, was what it is as a picture, very respectable. A tame couple very tamely executed; tediously proper and tediously true: not an atom of fire, not a fault; except that the whole was a mistake, and made us long for the happy easy blotting of Gainsborough and Reynolds: it had neither sparkle nor life; neither the mental nor physical complexion of Italy in either of the lovers. It is the property of Sir G. R. Philips, Bart.

Callcott's health was not strong as he advanced in years. Lady Callcott's, after a time, wholly failed; and for many years before her death, which happened in

1842, she was a complete invalid, confined to her chamber, almost to her bed. Yet in that sick chamber she managed, in the intervals of her suffering, to draw around her a circle of friends, of literary companions, of artists young and old; to learn of, and be interested in, the advance and social progress of the outer world from which she was so much cut off. In the long summer evenings, when these occasional gatherings took place, as the sun declined in the west and the day faded into twilight, the room and the company formed a picture such as memory reverts to with many regrets, and we are reminded of our own art aspirations, and the subjects of interest there discussed. The little bed on which the lady sat, partly dressed and propped up with pillows, covered with rich draperies, was placed before one of the windows of a room in the old house—a copyhold tenement of the Callcotts—in which the painter lived and died. Vines were trained across and across the window, and through their leaves the rays of the setting sun came tempered and moderated into green coolness. Inside the room there was usually a small selection of rare plants in pots, and little bouquets of choice flowers on the tables. Two or three dogs formed part of the company—one of large size, was a great favourite with the mistress; while the visitants, seated about on the old furniture of a quaint, picturesque, and irregular room, gave the painters of the party many hints of colour and effect as the light sank away into gloom. Lady Callcott mostly supported the conversation. She was somewhat imperious in her state chamber; the painter being more of a silent listener, until some incident of travel, some question of art, roused him up to earnest interest or

wise remark. He was a kindly-hearted man, and always seemed interested in the progress of the young; being quite willing to communicate to them his art-lore, and to advise with them on the progress of their pictures; and for his sake the young painters (who in the latter days of his life had begun to flock to Kensington, for that its air was clearer and its daylight longer than in Newman Street and Charlotte Street,) made it a rule to take their works on the morning of sending in to the Academy, and range them before the sick lady who could not leave her chamber, that she might have a sight at least of some portion of the coming exhibition; and then, their labours done for awhile, off they trooped to Willesden or Richmond, or some quiet suburb, to let off their exuberant spirits—for artists are right merry fellows—in quoits or football, in hockey or rounders: a custom which has continued to this day, although the cause of its institution has long since left us. After Lady Callcott's death, Callcott's nieces took charge of his household.

Some time prior to the excitement which pervaded the whole art world when the commissioners for decorating the Houses of Parliament called for competitions in historic painting, Callcott, incited perhaps by the success of "Raphael and the Fornarina" (for in the eyes of many it was a success), again came forward as an historic painter, and sent to the Academy, in 1840, a picture, with the figures rather larger than life, of "Milton dictating *Paradise Lost* to his Daughters." It was a large picture, rather than a great one; a picture that would have taxed the strength of a man in the prime of his art to produce, and was too much for one

enfeebled by illness, and in the decline of his powers. It impressed the spectator with an oppressive sense of the labour that had called it forth, and of the labour that had been given to its completion; rather than with the grandeur of the subject and the severity of its treatment; yet it satisfied most of the conditions and rules of art, and wanted but the fire of youth and genius to make it a real and impressive work. It was indeed too much for the physical powers of the painter, whose health rapidly declined from this time. On the death of Mr. Seguier, he was appointed to the duties of surveyor of Crown pictures, but was prevented from entering upon the active duties of his office. In the same quiet nook in "The Mall, Kensington Gravel-pits," in the house wherein he was born—with the same clipped old elms in front of it that he had looked on when a child, but which were shortly after to be removed from the face of the earth by the buildings rapidly advancing from the outskirts of the metropolis—he passed the short remainder of his days, and died regretted by many, on the 25th November, 1844. He was buried at Kensall Green.

In commenting upon his art it will be seen that we consider his best works to have been painted between 1812 and 1826, when those we have already named were produced, together with his "Entrance to the Pool of London," 1816; "Calm in the Medway," 1820; "Rochester," 1824, and others of the same character, which will place him in the first rank as a landscape painter. He early became aware that with the limited scale of light and dark, of colour and negation, at the command of the painter, as compared with that of Nature, a compromise must absolutely be made, and

he adopted the principle of reducing the positive tints of his pictures to negative ones, diffusing light pretty generally throughout the whole, and making the figures, which he introduced with great skill, the telling points of the composition; both the strongest lights and darks, and the purest hues of colour, being focussed in their draperies. As these were naturally the points of most interest the system was a sound one; the picture gained great breadth, and was from its lightness and the salient brilliancy of the figures, always pleasing in our dark rooms. By this system the secondary green of trees became, as treated by Callcott, a tertiary citrine; his skies rarely contained azure blue, and his buildings were varied hues of brown. It is not so obvious in his early works, since in them his reference to Nature modified it; but when in after-life his works were in great demand, and he was obliged to produce them by system rather than by immediate reference to Nature, the principle of his composition became very apparent. This may be seen in the two works in the Vernon collection (No. 340), "Dutch Peasants returning from Market," painted in 1834; and (No. 346) "The Entrance to Pisa from Leghorn," painted in 1833. In the first, note the invariable hue of Callcott's greens in the trees; and that the only actual bit of primitive colour is in the red bodice of the principal figure, and the petticoat of the one walking through the water; while in the latter, the whole surface of the picture is of negative hues of grey and brown, over which the figures are dispersed as telling points of colour.

This practice made his small pictures very agreeable, as will be seen in some charming specimens both

in the Vernon and Sheepshanks collections, but was apt to be a little vapid and empty in larger works; and, carried to excess in his latest works, resulted, as was naturally to be expected, in weakness and insipidity. This was the case with his last large picture, painted in 1842, "An English Landscape;" the subject being a group of cows standing in a pool of water under some trees, of which an eminent figure painter, who was asked what he thought of it, answered, perhaps even more wittily than justly, "I should say it was milk and water." In his early pictures he painted with a firm and manly execution; in his latter, when his works became, as we have said, more conventional and less realistic, and when he was influenced, perhaps insensibly, by the practice of Turner, he endeavoured to achieve air tint—infinity of parts combined with breadth of light—by scumblings and scraping the surface, by glazings and thin paintings, which further contribute to give his pictures an artificial look. We greatly prefer the English landscapes of the period already named; but some of his Italian compositions have an air of classic grandeur, which, if we cannot place him near Turner, at least induces us to regret that such art is fast dying out of our school: dying out before those merely imitative landscapes which are painted out of doors and direct from Nature. The "Italian Landscape," the property of D. Ward Chapman, Esq., exhibited in the British Institution in 1863, is among the best of this class. It consists of many grand features of landscape scenery well brought together; the figures suited to the subject, well drawn, and introduced with the truest taste into the composition. On comparing it with similar works by

Turner, its fault appeared in its great deficiency of air tint. This is more especially the case with the middle distance; but it is seen even in the foreground, where the masses are too brown and solid, and all the waving intricacy of branch and leaf is lost in the endeavour after solidity and breadth.

Still, with all the faults of this picture, and of the school to which it belongs, how much is the loss to be deplored of the talent which produced it! What a refined art! What an attempt to lift us out of the commonplaces of Nature! It generalized too much, no doubt, and was deficient in imitation; but it is succeeded by a school which objects to all generalization, all selection — art being rejected for the literal imitation of unselected Nature; the art of dwelling but too often on the meanest and most trivial details. Callcott himself never painted direct from Nature, but from drawings and studies; his art would have been better had he *studied* Nature more by colour. His pictures wanted this, as much as the new school wants the study of composition, arrangement and selection; and will assuredly lose by neglecting art altogether, and thinking that a particular rather than a general study of Nature is all that is required. Callcott's early study enabled him, as we have seen, to paint the figures in his landscape well; but it did not fit him for a figure painter. His weakness is shown in his smaller figure pictures as much as in his larger. His "Anne Page and Slender," his "Falstaff and Simple," both in the Sheepshanks Collection, if they evidence the painter's taste, do not prove his powers. They are weak and tame, and have rather the appearance of being painted from the lay figure than from Nature.

While it is given to but few, very few, artists to attain the highest rank in art, it is an honourable end to have stamped a marked individuality on any of its varied modes of appealing to mankind. If the former was denied to *William Collins, R.A.*, it at least was given to him to find a somewhat untrodden path in art for himself, and to make the latter success his own by the way he treated his subjects. William Collins was born in Great Titchfield Street, on the 18th September, 1788. Although an Englishman by birth, by parentage he was allied to each of the sister kingdoms; his mother being a native of Edinburgh and his father born at Wicklow in Ireland. The elder Collins had settled in England as a writer and journalist, and to these, considering them as precarious means of supporting his family, he added the business of a picture dealer. The love of landscape scenery in the younger Collins might be derived from both parents, born as they were in places remarkable for picturesque beauty; the two sons, William and Francis, moreover, were from their father's business early thrown among art and artists; and brought up in its very atmosphere, what wonder that William, the eldest, chose it for his pursuit in life. His first studies, we are told, were from the objects around him, and these alternated with "copies of pictures and drawings for the small patrons and dealers of the day."

Collins' father was intimate, among others, with George Morland (an intimacy which subsequently led to his writing the life of that artist); and the son was very anxious to be introduced to a man who was everywhere spoken of as a wonder of erratic genius, and who had promised to admit the lad to his studio,

that he might at least see the conduct of his pictures. It so happened that the boy's first sight of the famous animal painter was at his father's house, under very questionable circumstances, sleeping off, in the kitchen, a fit of filthy intoxication; this may have been a lesson for our young painter, who was through life a man of the most correct habits. From this time Collins was a visitor at Morland's painting-room as often as the irregularities of that painter would permit. He seems to have had a high sense of his talents, and to have taken great interest in the places where he had been in company with Morland, when in after-life he revisited them. We are told, however, he did not consider that he gained any remarkable advantage in the practical part of his art from the kind of instruction which Morland was able to convey; but those who examine the works of the two men will see that the early impression made by the art of the eccentric painter had a marked influence on the future art of Collins, and perhaps first led him to those rustic subjects which he handled so skilfully, and treated with a refinement which was denied to the man of gross sensuality and intemperate habits.

Pursuing his desultory studies under his father's superintendence, alternately painting from a group of objects, perchance jars or blacking bottles, with his friend John Linnell; sketching from Nature and copying pictures spurious and original, with the advantage also of seeing the rapid pencil of Morland at work to produce means to continue his excesses, young Collins reached his nineteenth year, and was sufficiently advanced in 1807 to obtain admission as a student in the Royal Academy, and

also fortuitously to become an exhibitor on its walls. Of these first pictures, "Two Views of Millbank," there is no record further than their insertion in the catalogue.

Had we no other data on which to reason, we might be assured from the steadfast character of the man that the habits of the youth were diligent and orderly, and that he made every use of the advantages for study that the schools of the Academy supply; but his companions speak of Collins' industry in the pursuit of art; and his choice of these companions was so judicious that he made friends with men who continued warmly attached to him through life: of these Wilkie was one of the most intimate.

In 1809, Collins was advanced to the life-school, and in the same year his pictures, both in the Academy and in the British Institution, obtained some share of public notice; and, what was even of more importance to a struggling artist fighting his own way in life, they found purchasers also. It is to be noted, moreover, that though studying the antique and the nude figure, the subjects of his pictures, in the Institution, both in 1808 and in 1809, as well as in the Academy, were either landscapes, or landscapes combined with rustic figures. As years passed on, young Collins improved in his art, though not rapidly; his works had little of the richness and less of the free handling he arrived at afterwards, if we may judge of them by the somewhat respectable study of "A Country Kitchen," painted in 1811, and now in the Sheepshanks Collection at South Kensington. Early in the year 1812, Collins lost a father to whom he seems to have been tenderly attached; a short diary of this period, preserved by his son, very touchingly paints

the few anxious days which preceded his death, and the destitution of the family, now left wholly dependent on the young painter; but friends rose up to help, as they mostly do for those who are true-hearted, and we find one kind friend coming forward to assist them with furniture in lieu of that which the creditors had laid their hands on; while another, Sir Thomas Heathcote, one of Collins' first patrons, not only paid him half the price of a picture in advance, but offered a loan of money in addition. From this time, in young Collins' pictures, the figures were more predominant than the landscape; his subjects, mostly the joys and sorrows of children, won their way in public estimation, and seem to have found ready purchasers.

This is very evident when we turn to the list of pictures by Collins appended to his *Life* by his son. In 1813, when as yet only twenty-four years of age, the painter received for his works no less than 557*l.*; a large income at that time, when purchasers were few, and the prices of works by the best artists, perhaps less than half those of the present day. It is true this was rather an exceptional year, the receipts of 1812 being only 230*l.*, and those of 1814, 350*l.*; but even the average of the three years, 379*l.*, is large for a youth of twenty-four to realize by his art; and it shows how popular were the subjects of his choice, and how true it is that the quality of colour in art is the most attractive to the public; and, when joined to subjects appealing as did those of Collins, to the heart and understanding of all, is sure to win an early success. Both these qualities were united in a work of this period which became very widely popular, and is a representative work of the painter's,

some of whose best pictures give us the sports and labours, the trials and games of rustic children, combined with the truly pastoral scenery of our beautiful and picturesque land. "The Sale of the Pet Lamb," painted in 1812, united the best qualities of the painter's art very happily.

The incident is one of frequent occurrence in rural life, where the *cade* lamb, as it is called,—a lamb which by accident has lost its dam—is given away to the cottager, that it may be petted into life, if possible, by the active sympathy of his children; it gradually grows into their young hearts as companion and playmate, until its age, or some pressing need, gives it up to the usual fate of its kind. In the painter's treatment of the subject, the butcher-lad has come to lead away the unconscious victim; he does his duty kindly for the children's sake, although (as labouring in his vocation) *he* is untouched by any sentiment the others feel. One of the children pushes him away from their playfellow, another feeds it for the last time, while a little girl clings to the mother, who is receiving the price of the lamb, tearfully urging that it should not be taken from them. The incident was touchingly and simply rendered, and free from false sentiment in the elders of the party who are bargaining the sale: such sentimentality, dangerously incident to this class of subject, does not belong to a rural population, but to a rank apart from, and above them. We ourselves once remarked to a cottager who was followed about by a well-grown sheep which had been her companion from its lambhood, that it was as "tame as a dog." "Ay, sir," she replied, "it's far better nor a dog, for when one is tired of it,

we can eat it." But children of all classes are alike in tenderness and fondness for animals, and these are the leading actors in this rural tragedy. This picture, with one or two others of the same class, so advanced Collins in the estimation of his brother artists that in November, 1814, he was elected an associate of the Royal Academy.

The painter having obtained his first promotion in art, had taken a new and larger house; but although his works were popular and many were purchased, he had still difficulties to struggle with; in subsequent years fortune was not equally favourable, and we find an entry in his diary in the spring of 1816, "A black-looking April day, with one sixpence in my pocket, 700*l.* in debt, shabby clothes, a fine house, and a large stock of my own handiworks." It must be remembered that the young painter had his mother and brother at this time to provide for, that he had entered upon the responsibilities of a larger establishment, and also that, on looking down the list of pictures and their prices, affixed to his *Life*, it is evident from statements in his diaries, that some of the pictures were not purchased at the time they were painted, but afterwards, when he was growing still more into fame and notice.

In the troubles of this period of his life, he cast about for some new class of subjects to attract the attention of the public, and made journeys to the sea-coast, first at Cromer, and afterwards at Hastings, painting coast scenery, enlivened with groups of fisher-boys, boats, fish, &c., which he treated with great freshness and truth. In 1818, one of this class, "Scene on the Coast of Norfolk," attracted the attention of the Prince Regent, by whom it was purchased, and is now, with a picture

subsequently painted, in the corridor at Windsor Castle. This patronage by royalty led to many other commissions, so that the painter gradually overcame his early difficulties, almost gave up painting portraits, which he had resorted to as an aid to his precarious income, and having made himself a place of his own in art, was elected a full member of the academic body in February 1820. In 1822, during a visit to Scotland in company with his friend Wilkie, Collins completed a long-standing engagement by marrying Miss Geddes, by whom he had two sons. Both are at present living, and men of literary reputation; the elder having written a Life of his father, full of matters of interest both to artists and the general public.

Collins was now established in life, having obtained the highest honours of the profession, and having in his particular branch of landscape art, as Wilkie told him, the ball at his feet, he had but to paint as he had begun, to widen his popularity. There was no fear of any lack of subjects in the inexhaustible field he had chosen, nor of their palling on the public taste. Such subjects he continued to paint until the year 1836, when he produced two of his very best works—"Sunday Morning," and "Happy as a King;" a repetition of the latter picture, through the generosity of the late Mr. Vernon, is the property of the public. Wilkie Collins tells us that the subject of the picture was first suggested to his father by the story of the country boy whose ideal of kingly happiness was swinging upon a gate all day long and eating fat bacon; but this must have been a lazy lout, and his swinging as listless and sleepy as a swine in the sun, whilst Collins has made his rustic

boiling over with active mirth, seated on the top rail, one foot entwined in the bars to sustain him, the other kicking off his shoe. Two other children hang beside him, a boy and a girl, while a third pushes wide open the gate to let it slam with a force that would have sadly discomposed the bacon-feeding monarch. The picture is full of life and action, the landscape is broad and simple in manner, and beautifully suggestive.

"Such," as his son says, "were the works with which Mr. Collins took his leave for a time of the English public." Wilkie, while on the Continent, had in his letters repeatedly urged his friend to see the beauties of Italy; the many subjects he would find there for his pencil, and the desirableness of filling his mind with new ideas; and at length Collins made up his mind to the journey, and on the 19th September, 1836, he left England to make some stay in the South.

To us who look back over his whole course and review his art life, it may be permitted to doubt if the Italian journey was at all beneficial to his reputation. It is true that some beautiful landscapes resulted from it; such as that seen "From the Caves of Ulysses at Sorrento, Bay of Naples," a work of great truth and beauty. The sea, pure and pellucid, is seen stretching away to the far horizon, where it joins the sky, looking as if those Mediterranean waters, waking up as they do into sudden and raging storms, were a haven of rest which could never know change. But Collins was essentially an English painter; from his youth up he had lived among the rustic children he loved to paint and the rural scenery in which he placed them; and although Italian mendicants, priests, and lazzaroni might be a

change to the public, yet even at the time, they were hardly thought a change for the better; while to ourselves, one such picture as "Happy as a King" is worth all the figure pictures, the fruits of his Italian journey. Nor can we forget that to the treacherous smiles of an Italian sun we ultimately owed the loss of the artist. While at Sorrento, he could not be persuaded that it was dangerous to paint out of doors in the heat of the day. The temptation to do so was great; the artist was incapable of idleness, and continued against the remonstrances of his friends to work at all hours; the result was a severe attack of rheumatic fever, which lasted many weeks, and left behind it a disease of the heart, which troubled him during the remaining years of his life, and finally resulted in his death on the 17th February, 1847.

As a landscape and figure painter, Collins was not of that imitative school who paint direct from Nature; his practice was to make drawings of all the parts and details which he intended to use in his work, to study the effects of air and light on the spot, and then to paint his picture in his studio from these materials. He sketched in, first the general composition of his picture, the disposition of the parts, the rack of clouds, the figures he intended to form part of the composition; often arranging and re-arranging, until he was satisfied with this stage of his labours. From this he proceeded to the dead colouring. He began, as is usual, with the sky, which he endeavoured to finish at once, and, failing to do so, would hang a wet sheet before it during the night, to keep it wet for the next day; and this part of the work he finished with the sweetener. He then painted from the horizon

forward, finishing the various distances towards the foreground. To secure the true light and shade of his figures, he adopted at times the method of his friend Wilkie, grouping clay figures or dressed dolls in a box lighted for that purpose. His son tells us that he was ever most anxious to execute his works with such durable materials and pigments as would ensure their preservation not only during his own lifetime, but to posterity. He does not appear to have given in to the use of asphaltum, which his friend Wilkie used so largely to the destruction of his own pictures, and recommended so warmly to others; he used magylph, it is true, but with proper restraint.

In his diaries he has left us some valuable records of the vehicles with which various of his pictures are painted — records well worth careful investigation by those who have the opportunity of comparing them with the several works. Thus, "Feb. 23, 1819.—'Fishermen on the Look-out'" (purchased by the Earl of Liverpool), "is painted entirely in copal, thinned with turpentine, without wax." "Apl. 5. — 'Fisherman's Return,' in linseed oil, boiled with copal varnish—copal varnish in the colours as a dryer, upon an unprimed cloth." "19th.—Began a portrait of the 'Duchess of Newcastle,' the face in copalled oil, the other parts in copal varnish." "Sketch of 'Boothby's Children,' 1st April, varnished the whole thickly in copal, and finished it in the same." Then again, in December, 1819, we find an entry, "'Coast Scene, with Fishermen hauling up Boats,'" &c., for Sir Thos. Heathcote, which "is painted in linseed oil, and turpentine and magylph, made of the shook-up drying oil and mastick varnish,

and mastick varnish with gold size in the slow dryers; chrome yellow, and Field's orange, and French cobalt used occasionally." In some of his works he has used his vehicle too freely, and cracking has been the result; while in those where he has used copal largely, we should expect the lights to have become somewhat *horny*.

Much of Collins' reputation was derived from his happy choice of subjects. These, in many respects, correspond with the subjects chosen by Morland, but are treated with far more refinement; and as many of his actors are children, and he entered thoroughly into their sports and habits, they interest us much more. His landscapes are always an important feature of the picture; the handling and execution a little akin to Gainsborough, having his freshness and a little of his ease, with greater finish; the figures, in what are almost pure landscapes, are often extremely well introduced and important in themselves, yet do not interfere with the importance of the landscape. His picture of "Seaford, in Sussex," one of his latest works, and now in the Sheepshanks Collection, is an instance both of his powers as a landscape painter, and the judicious introduction of figures without detracting from the scene. It is one of his carefully painted pictures. A clear daylight sky, with large cumulus clouds floating over a sea that rolls lazily on to the distant beach, with just sufficient swell to indicate the monotonous sound that breaks the rest of a summer noon. Over the wide expanse the shadows of the clouds flit idly from shore to sea, from sea to far horizon. On the cliffs from which the scene is viewed are three children, two boys and a girl, engaged in carving out and rigging a boat. They

are better drawn than usual with the painter: the heads properly set on the shoulders; the limbs and flesh well painted; the colour not forced, but well adapted to the landscape; and the whole work carefully completed, without mean details. The picture of "Rustic Civility," in the same collection, is another instance of his happy choice of subject. Some youngsters have opened the gate leading from a common to a coming stranger, whose shadow is projected before him on the way; the eldest lad pushes open the gate with his back, and touches his shaggy locks to the horseman. With such simple materials, Collins has made a charming picture, the landscape background being very pleasing and suggestive.

Collins was a devout imitator of Nature, but in its generalities rather than in details. He had a strong feeling for colour, but was a very indifferent draughtsman. Even when he had nature to rely on, as in his English rustics, he was often sadly deficient in drawing: of this, the boy pushing and the boy hanging back from the gate, in "Rustic Civility" are instances; theirs were actions of some difficulty which his young models could not sustain, and the painter's memory did not supply the loss. Almost all his foreshortened heads (and he was very fond of the pretty shy action when children look upwards with the head depressed) are well intended, but wholly out of drawing. He painted his Italian sketches in this country, away from the models that had suggested them, and in such works his drawing and execution were still more timid and feeble. Then again his draperies are often merely rags, suggestive of pleasant colour it is true, but distasteful to those who desire somewhat of form or fold and flow.

He carried on the art of Morland and Gainsborough with a difference, for as an animal painter he had no power. He was of the school of artists, and not mere imitators, and has been followed in his peculiar walks by Hook and others, who, perceiving the thoroughly English character of his art, have adopted it not servilely but with feelings of their own, increasing the popularity of such subjects by the originality and skill with which they treat them.

CHAPTER XII.

IDEAL LANDSCAPE.—MARTIN AND DANBY.

John Martin—His Birth—Early Attachment to Art—Apprenticed—Runs away—Commences his Art-education—Muss the Enamel-painter—Martin comes to London—Applies himself to Study—Paints in Enamel at Collins's Manufactory—Exhibits at the R.A. 1811—His first Pictures—"Belshazzar's Feast"—Opinions upon this Work—Description of it—Repeated in Glass—Discontented with the R.A.—But exhibits there—Not satisfied with the British Institution—Joins the Society of British Artists—Paints large Scriptural Subjects—Which engraved spread his Reputation—His Illustrations of Milton—His Schemes of public Utility—Sketches round London—In the midst of his Labours struck with Paralysis—Death—Opinion upon his Art Merits—*Francis Danby, A.R.A.*—Son of a small Irish Farm Proprietor—Commences Art-study in Dublin—Pupil of O'Connor—Exhibits his first Work—Comes to London—Difficulties of his intended Return—Stops at Bristol—Determines to remain in England—His "Upas Tree" described—And his "Disappointed Love"—Anecdote of Mr. Sheepshanks—"The Clearing-up after a Shower"—And "Sunset after a Storm"—Elected Associate of the Academy—But excluded from the full Honour—His "Delivery of Israel from Egypt"—Comparison with Martin—Long Residence Abroad—Resumes his Place at the Exhibitions—Death—True Poetry of his Art.

In our preceding chapters we have given some account of the contemporaries and successors of Turner, who were purely landscape painters, relying on natural scenery as influenced by storm and sunshine, by noonday or twilight, their figures being merely accessories to give life and interest to the scene; but Turner himself, in addition to his art as a landscape painter, depicting the scenery of the present age and of classic antiquity, of

plain and mountain, of ocean and river, painted works wherein the scenery was subordinate to the subject, such as the pictures of "Ulysses deriding Polyphemus," the "Jason," &c.

This chapter will treat of painters whose works are wholly of the latter class; who rarely painted realistic landscape, but occupied themselves largely with the poetical and ideal. Of such was John Martin, who studied Nature not to realize her pastoral or rural aspects, but to embody for us, subjects derived from history and poetry, in which the landscape is made to sympathize with the story, and is equally necessary with the figures to the effect on the spectator.

John Martin was born in the north of England, at a house called Eastland Ends, Haydon Bridge, near Hexham, on the 19th of July, 1789; as he grew to the age when it was necessary to settle his future career in life, his taste and inclination were so decidedly towards art, that his father adopted a somewhat practical application of it, and determined to make the lad a herald-painter. The family having removed to Newcastle, he was apprenticed at the age of fourteen to one Wilson, a coach-builder of that town, and, with little inclination to the branch of art he was to pursue, continued to labour as an apprentice for twelve months. At that time, by the terms of his apprenticeship, he was to begin to receive a weekly payment for his work; but his master asserting that three months of the period had been passed as on trial, demurred to the payment, wishing to postpone it yet three months longer. Martin, who disliked his work, ran away from the workshop; his father approved the step, and supplied him with colours

and materials to practise art. He had just begun to feel happy in his emancipation from trade drudgery, when he was brought before the alderman of the town as a runaway apprentice; but his answer to the charge, showing that his master had himself broken the contract, was upheld by the town authorities, and from the ability with which he conducted his case, his indentures were given up, and he was set free to follow the art he loved.

His father then placed him under the instruction of an Italian practising art in Newcastle—Bonifaccio Musso, the father of Charles Musso, or Muss, afterwards well known as an enamel and miniature painter. At the end of the year, Charles Muss, who had settled in London, and was gradually making his way, invited his father to town to reside with him, and asked Martin to accompany him. After a few months' delay, Martin, with the permission of his father, repaired to London, where he arrived in September 1806. After residing some time with Muss, he became dissatisfied with his accommodation in the family, and removed to Adam Street West, Cumberland Place, and, as he tells us, worked hard during the day to support himself; while at night he diligently studied architecture and perspective, by the knowledge of which he was hereafter to achieve so much of the reputation he enjoyed. Muss had introduced Martin to Collins, a glass manufacturer, who resided at No. 106 in the Strand, and much of Martin's employment at this time consisted in painting in enamel colours on glass and china. At the age of nineteen, as the painter has himself recorded (although other authorities say twenty-two), Martin married, and he says that he had to use every available means for his

support, teaching, painting small oil pictures, glass and enamel painting, water-colour painting, &c.

In 1811 we find him for the first time an exhibitor at the Royal Academy; his work is described as "Landscape, a composition;" and his residence, "Thanet Place, Temple Bar," shows that he was living near the scene of his daily labours. Speaking of his marriage, which, if it took place when he was nineteen, must have been in the year 1808 or 1809, the painter himself says, "It was now indeed necessary for me to work, and, as I was ambitious of fame, I determined on painting a large picture, and in 1812 produced my *first* work, 'Sadak in Search of the Waters of Oblivion,' which was executed in a month;" and he adds, "You may easily guess my anxiety when I heard the men who were to place it in the frame, disputing as to which was the top of the picture:" it was, however, to the inexpressible delight of himself and his wife, sold for fifty guineas, so that his first start in life was of good augury.

His next year's work was "Paradise, Adam's first Sight of Eve," exhibited in 1813, and also sold, as was the "Clytie," exhibited in 1814. The painter tells us that he sent it for Mr. West's inspection, who received him with great urbanity, and introduced him to Leslie, saying the two young painters should be acquainted, as he prophesied they would reflect honour on their respective countries. The "Paradise" was exhibited in the great room of the Royal Academy, but when, *the next* year, the "Clytie," and subsequently the "Joshua," were hung in the ante-room, he considered himself insulted by the place allotted to them. The "Joshua" was afterwards exhibited at the British Institu-

tion, and obtained one of their prizes of 100 guineas, but continued unsold for many years; it was exhibited at the Academy in 1816, three years after the "Adam and Eve," and at the British Institution in 1817. Certain it is that Martin early began to entertain a high opinion of his own abilities, leading him to think his position in art one that could not be questioned, and that ought to command for him the first rank and the best place. He continued, however, to exhibit at the Royal Academy, but sent his more important works to the British Institution. A conversation with Allston, in which Martin wholly differed from that painter, led him to paint "Belshazzar's Feast." Leslie, he says, spent a morning in attempting to convince him that his treatment was wrong, but he persevered, and in 1821 completed his subject, and exhibited it at the British Institution; on this occasion he was rewarded with a prize of 200 guineas; the picture was considered a new mode of treating such subjects, and created a sensation among the general public.

Martin had in 1817 been appointed "Historical Landscape Painter to the Princess Charlotte and Prince Leopold," but artists objected to such pictures being classed as historical. In historical painting, they said, the principal source of interest must ever lie in the action and expression of the human beings with whom the painter peoples his canvas; and while the public were startled into admiration, the artists too largely denounced Martin's pictures as meretricious, because the effects introduced were forced—the work scenic—a cross between architecture and landscape, in which the human figures (shapeless masses of limbs and drapery) tell only

by their quantity, the architecture serving rather to contribute to perspective immensity than necessary to the impression of the subject. These opinions, however, were not shared by all; some of the best artists thought highly of the genius of the painter. Wilkie, writing to Sir G. Beaumont in 1821, says, "Martin's picture is a phenomenon. All that he has been attempting in his former pictures is here brought to maturity, and although weak in all those points in which he can be compared with other artists, he is eminently strong in what no other artist has attempted. 'Belshazzar's Feast' is the subject: his great element seems to be the geometrical properties of space, magnitude, and number, in the use of which he may be said to be boundless. The contrivance and disposition of the architecture is full of imagination."

The painter made use in this picture of all the properties at his command—the hanging gardens—the tower of Babel—range upon range of massive columns, and terraces one above the other, are there, and made clever use of by the aid of perspective; the light which lights the impious feast is derived by the painter from the letters of light, the handwriting on the wall, which the prophet is explaining to the terrified king—the light, hot and fiery, is shed on the hurrying group of frightened revellers who are expressing their alarm in a somewhat melodramatic manner. The seven-branched candlestick from the holy place is over the throne of Belshazzar; but if the ornaments on the banqueting table are the other sacred utensils of the temple, they are anything but oriental in their fashion, and might well have been lent for the painter's use by the great silversmiths of that

day, Messrs. Rundell and Bridge. The hot brown of the foreground is carried into the sky by the clouds of the rising storm, so that the hanging gardens and the monster tower, with all the range of impossible buildings and mountains of structure, are of a hot, foxy hue. On the left the young moon is seen in the heavens. A better artist would have improved the picture by spreading its cool light through parts of the work, contrasting it with the supernatural illumination of the foreground, and bringing out tower and column, lighted as in nature by its beams, from the dark solid masses. Martin, who was still connected with glass-painting, repeated the subject on a sheet of plate-glass. This was shown in the Strand, inserted in a wall, so that the light was really transmitted through the terrible handwriting; the effect was startling, yet it was surely allied more to the diorama than to fine art.

Though Martin quarrelled with the Academy about the hanging of his "Clytie" and "Joshua," and sent his "Belshazzar" to the British Institution, he did not wholly secede from Somerset House; between 1819 and 1821 he exhibited six works there, in the latter year his—"Revenge"—from Collins' *Ode to the Passions*. He again exhibited in 1823 and 1824. The picture in 1823, "The Paphian Bower," was a work of some size; and if we can trust our recollection, it subsequently figured at the British Institution under a new title, "The Graces culling Posies," a part having been pasted over, and a new subject inserted in the centre of the canvas. Martin soon found, however, that even the British Institution did not use him so well as he thought he deserved. He says in his evidence before the Committee of the House

of Commons, in 1836, that there was some connection between the directors of the Institution and the Academy that made them give the academicians the best places, so that he rarely hazarded sending a large work to Pall Mall. He then became an exhibitor at Suffolk Street with the Society of British Artists; but here also he was no doubt ill-used, or thought he was, for after 1836 we find him for the rest of his life again at the Royal Academy, pretty constantly exhibiting there his important works, as well as others of minor interest. In all, between 1836 and 1852 he exhibited sixty-seven pictures, an average of more than four per annum.

After the "Belshazzar's Feast," which many thought his best picture, Martin continued to cover large canvases with poetical and scriptural subjects, such as "Adam and Eve entertaining the Angel Raphael," "The Deluge," "The Eve of the Deluge," "The Fall of Nineveh," "Pandemonium," &c. Many of these works were engraved, and as that art was peculiarly suited to display his pictures, the impressions had a large sale both at home and abroad, and greatly spread his reputation. Some of the plates he engraved himself, and complained before a Committee of the House of Commons of the injury that he, in common with other artists, sustained by the insufficient protection against piracy afforded to such works. His popularity led to his being engaged on illustrations of Milton, and many of those to the *Paradise Lost* have a dreamy grandeur beyond what might be supposed possible in works of such small size. For these illustrations he is said to have received 2,000*l.*

Martin had an eye to other subjects besides art, subjects of public utility; such, for instance, as the supply

of pure water for the metropolis, which engaged the painter's attention in 1827, 1828, and 1829. In view of this, it is evident that he visited all the water sources of the surrounding country; we fear that it never advanced his pecuniary interests, but to these visits must be attributed many of the very clever studies in water-colours of the valleys of the Thames, the Brent, the Wandle, the Wey, the Tillingbourne, as also from many of the hills and eminences within a circle of twenty or thirty miles. Though Nature in these works is treated with the peculiar manner he has adopted, there is in many of them a poetry that elevates them out of the region of commonplace. Besides his labours towards giving us a supply of pure water—for which, if unsuccessful on the definite plan he advocated, he deserves our gratitude, since the attention at all hands called to the subject led to the adoption of remedial methods—he was also occupied in controversies and plans for improving the sewerage of the metropolis, and for connecting the various roadways that lead to and from London; but to these schemes, as not specially connected with our subject, it is only necessary to allude.

He was yet labouring assiduously at his art, with large pictures in various stages of progress on his easel, when, on the 12th of November, 1853, while at work on a picture, he was struck with paralysis, which rendered him speechless and deprived him of the use of his right hand. From the first there was no prospect of his recovery; but he lingered on, and was taken to the Isle of Man in hopes of some improvement. He seemed, however, to have entertained an idea that abstinence was a remedy for his complaint, and to have resisted taking

sufficient food; so that he sank rapidly, and died on the 17th of February, 1854.

We can hardly agree with Bulwer, who said that Martin was "more original, more self-dependent than Raphael or Michael Angelo;" but if, in his lifetime, Martin was overpraised, he was certainly unjustly depreciated afterwards. Many, both of his brother artists and the public, when the first astonishment his pictures created had passed away, called his art a trick and an illusion, his execution mechanical, his colouring bad, the figures he introduced vilely drawn, their action and expression bombastic and ridiculous. But granting this wholly or partially, it must also be remembered that his art, or manner if you will, was thoroughly original; that it opened up a new view, which, in his hands, yielded glimpses of the sublime, dreams, and visions the art had not hitherto displayed, and that others, better prepared by previous study, working *after* him, have delighted, and are still delighting, the world with their works. Had he painted but one or two pictures, the impression made on the public mind might have remained; but when it became evident that his succeeding pictures were really but repetitions of the first novel idea, they palled even upon his admirers, and their manner became tedious.

It is disgraceful to a country which has received such noble bequests of art from patrons of art, and from artists themselves, that nothing has been systematically done towards forming a national collection of British art. Were there such a collection, at least one fine work by Martin would have found a place there, and we should have had a picture to refer to in support of our remarks. No such work is at present accessible, and the

public of the present day know the painter mostly through worn-out prints from his pictures. The "Coronation of her Majesty," the property of Mr. Edwin Atherstone, has been some time on loan at South Kensington. Though the incident chosen is a fine one—her Majesty rising from her throne to assist the aged Lord Rolle, who has fallen in climbing the steps to do homage; yet it is not a subject that is at all suited to Martin's art—it is too real and actual a fact. We may, however, refer to it to show how helpless he was wherever the figure had to be treated. The peers, in their long robes, with their mantles of ermine and coronets, look like stuffed dummies; and her Majesty, the centre-point of the picture, is wholly without dignity in form or action: in fact, it was the masses of figures, piled up from front to back of the grey old Abbey, that seized the imagination of the painter—the ceremonial as a whole, far more than the expression of the particular incident selected. This repetition of quantities in the architectural structures he loved to introduce, was one of the great elements of the grandeur, space, and magnitude of his scenes; but applied to figures, it was less appropriate and less successful. Even the details of his architecture, too often repeated, occasioned the remark that his pictures were done by recipe; and St. John Long, who, before he took to curing consumption, was in search of some wonder to advertise himself, was led to ask Martin if he would "sell him his secret." It was even said at the time that these multiplied forms were done by stamp and stencil.

In his colouring, Martin was not successful; gay colours, and want of tone and harmony, he never overcame, and there was somewhat of a sense of the china-

painter to the last. A reaching after startling effects by wrong opposition of colours, by extreme opposition of light and dark, and by forced and contorted action of the figures introduced, was but too apparent in all he did. His earlier pictures have sadly failed from the faulty pigments and vehicles used; but in this he is no worse than the greater number of his contemporaries.

His differences with the Academy had their rise from overweening self-esteem. In his evidence before the committee he says his "Clytie" was hung in a dark room, in a corner, and far too high; Sir Martin Shee asserted that it was *not* ill-placed: and we may remark that as Martin complains also that some academician on the varnishing days, spilt varnish on the "Clytie," it is evident that a picture by some academician must have been hung in the same dark room, in the same corner, and higher up still.

Sir Martin Shee, while speaking with high respect of Martin's talent, said that "a young man of twenty-two might well have waited and said to himself, I am young in the profession and must undergo trials and difficulties which all others have encountered, and to which juniors in all pursuits must necessarily submit; had he thought thus and continued to exhibit, he would have been long since a full member of the Royal Academy." Perhaps Martin felt so himself in after life; but the failing belonged apparently to his family. The painter had three brothers, one of whom used to write under the signature of Anti-Newton, and dubbed himself a philosopher; no doubt De Morgan has included some of his lucubrations in his "Bundle of Paradoxes:" there seems to have been a bee in his bonnet as with

other members of the family. In conversation with one of the great statesmen of the past age on whom he had obtruded himself, he said, "There are four brothers of us,—one is a soldier; one is a painter, that is my brother John; one is a philosopher, that is myself; and one is a church reformer, that is my brother Jonathan:" the same whose first act of church reform was the burning of York Minster. Martin's desire to reform the Academy, certainly was not to burn them out, but to turn them out. It is satisfactory, however, to see by his evidence, that he was on terms of friendship with, and admired many individual members, if he disliked them as a body.

While we have thought it right in the interests of truth to show that Martin's difference with the Royal Academy was captious, and arose from too high an opinion of his own early talent, we must also protest, on his behalf as well as on behalf of all the brotherhood, against the little allowance that is made for the sensitiveness of the artist's temperament, without which indeed none can be true artists. The old myth tells us that he who sought to rival Apollo had his skin stripped off his back for his pains, and it indicates pretty clearly how the artist shrinks from the rough touch of the rude, or the sharp sting of the critic. A picture may have taken a man of refined mind and poetic feeling months of labour in its production, yet no sooner is it exhibited than he is mortified either to see it passed by without a look, or, after a mere glance, bitterly criticised or abusively condemned. How few strive to place themselves at the stand point of the artist and examine the subject from his point of view. Few, indeed, have had the least training to know right from wrong in art; and how

painful is it to the artist to have his labours excepted to, and his works depreciated by men utterly incapable to judge of anything beyond what is merely eye-pleasing, their taste not having been cultivated beyond the appreciation of the lowest or the most meretricious qualities of art.

Self-esteem is almost a necessary ingredient of an artist's character: working out an idea day after day; tediously endeavouring to overcome the difficulties of execution; worried with his models; the freshness of the first thought, the first impulse, quite evaporated; aiming at something continually beyond his power of realization; if he is not self-conscious of his powers, what is to buoy him up through such difficulties? Men like Martin and Haydon have some mental support in that the Creator has endowed them with—may we not call it—self-confidence? At the same time it must be remembered that when the public verdict is to be pronounced on their works, the bitterness of disappointment in such minds is proportionate to the estimate they had formed of their own success. There are others, and these the truer artists, whose ideal is such that they can never hope to realize; who are quite as much dissatisfied with their own labours as is the most implacable critic; who, when they have even achieved a great success, feel it so far below what they had hoped to attain that they are quite prepared to adopt the most ignorant verdict against themselves as true; and suffer so much from self-judgment that they are cut to the heart with what they think confirms it. This it is that makes the day of opening the exhibition such a day of misery to most painters; every man thinks his own work the

worst; and while confident men, like those we have named, endeavour to escape from despondency by attributing their failure to a bad place or unjust hanging, what wonder that others, suffering in silence, give way under the burthen, when bitter criticism is added to their miseries?

Francis Danby, A.R.A., was another of the disappointed sons of genius. He was one of twin brothers, born near Wexford, on the 16th of November, 1793. His father, James Danby, was a farmer and small proprietor of that neighbourhood. About the time young Danby arrived at an age to prepare himself for the active duties of life, his father, who had removed to Dublin with his family, died. Francis Danby had been placed in the drawing classes of the Royal Dublin Society, and soon evinced such a desire to follow art as a profession that his mother was induced to consent. He afterwards studied under O'Connor, a landscape painter whose works have hardly been sufficiently appreciated. They have a certain massive and somewhat melancholy character, that may have influenced his pupil in the choice of the peculiar phase of landscape art which he adopted, and in which he was, during his lifetime, without a rival. Thus Danby's first work, publicly exhibited in Dublin in 1812, was a "Landscape—Evening." The bias had already been given towards that period of the day when breadth of effect and colour predominate, and the mystery of gloom and twilight divests even the most homely scene of its commonplace, and clothes the tamest forms with grandeur and ideality.

After painting some time with O'Connor, master and scholar managed between them to make up a purse to enable them to visit London, and see for themselves the

state of art in the capital. If Danby was an exhibitor in 1817, this journey most probably took place in 1816. It is related of them that they soon exhausted their means, and finding themselves almost penniless, they started on foot to Bristol, hoping to make their way back from that port to Dublin. When, however, they reached Bristol, they had difficulty, on the first night of their arrival, in paying for their night's lodging. In the morning Danby set to work, and made three drawings, which he carried for sale to a fancy stationer on College Green, and was fortunate in selling them for seven shillings each. By similar exertions he was soon enabled to provide a passage for his friend O'Connor back to Ireland. Danby, struck with what he had seen in London, and with a desire to enter lists where he had such powerful competitors to stimulate his exertions, determined to remain in England. We know from the pictures he exhibited in the Royal Academy that he stayed some time in Bristol. In 1817, we find a picture, "A View in Scotland," exhibited at Somerset House, by G. Danby, of Clifton, and there is every reason to suppose that the initial of the Christian name is a misprint, and that the picture was really by Francis Danby.

It is usual for his biographers to refer to "The Disappointed Love," which was exhibited in 1821, as his first picture. But the first really important picture—if, as we have seen, it was not the second—was "The Upas, or Poison Tree of the Island of Java." It is on a large canvas, 5 ft. 6 in. by 7 ft. 6 in., and was exhibited at the British Institution in 1820. This fabulous tree was said to grow on the island of Java, in the midst of a desert formed by its own pestiferous exhalations. These

destroyed all vegetable life in the immediate neighbourhood of the tree, and all animal life that approached it. Its poison was considered precious, and was to be obtained by piercing the bark, when it flowed forth from the wound. So hopeless, however, and so perilous was the endeavour to obtain it, that only criminals sentenced to death could be induced to make the attempt, and as numbers of them perished, the place became a valley of the shadow of death, a charnel-field of bones. To succeed in such a subject required a poetical mind, joined to powers of the highest order: no mere landscape painting, no mere imitation of Nature, would suffice to picture to us the gloomy horrors of this land of fear. Danby's interesting picture is now in the possession of the Rev. C. Hare Townshend. It represents a deep chasm in a valley of dark slaty rocks, into which the pale light of the hidden moon only partially penetrates. Above the black crest of the gorge is a space of star-lit sky, with the pointed summits of a mountain range stretching away into the distance. The sides of the cleft are rugged, full of rents and seams, and wholly bare. Vegetation there is none, but the solitary Upas growing out of the thin soil at the bottom of the valley. The whole rests in the silence of death, broken only by the dripping of a little fall of water from the gloomy rocks. The poison-seeker is in the foreground, about half-way down into the cavernous pit, and has just arrived within view of the tree and within the influence of the pestiferous vapour. He turns sickening from the sight; for at his feet are the bodies of several of his latest predecessors, while around the fearful tree the ground is white with the dry-bleached bones of multi-

tudes who have gone before him, and perished at the moment they had reached the goal. Animals there are none, instinct has warned them from the fatal spot; but a vulture, flying over the chasm, has fallen with extended wings almost at the feet of the fainting poison-seeker. The story has been vividly told, and yet the horrors do not painfully obtrude. It is a wonderful first attempt, and shows the original poetry of Danby's mind.

In 1821, Danby, then living at Kingsdown Place, Bristol, exhibited "Disappointed Love," the picture now No. 65 in the "Sheepshanks Collection." This also serves to show how from the first the painter had a higher aim than mere landscape painting; sought indeed to treat his picture as a poem, and to give ideal interest to his works. This picture tells at a glance a long tale of perfidy and disappointment, and nature sympathizes with the story. The work has the faults of a young man, but it has also the freshness of thought of a young mind. The painting is heavy, the figure ill-drawn, the weeds in the foreground outrageously out of proportion, growing also out of a rock, which could never have nourished them, and flagging and hanging as if painted from half withered specimens. But the poetical invention displayed makes us forget all this. The scene represents a dark, deep, black pool, overhung with a thick screen of foliage, curtaining it with sombre melancholy gloom, through which the joyous sunbeam never pierces. On the bank, seated on the damp ground, is a young girl, her thin clothing suited to the happy household circle, and ill-assorted with the dank marge of that dreary pool. Her head between her knees, she has sunk

down in hopeless misery, sobbing out her last sigh ere she plunges into the deep; her bonnet is beside her on the shore, a token for those who shall seek the lost one. The fragments of the cruel letter that has broken her heart, float slowly away on the sullen stream. One moment more, and she will be—at rest?

The full effect of the work is marred by the want of beauty in the girl, who is certainly not an "interesting female:" she is decidedly ugly. One of the writers having been entrusted by the late Mr. Sheepshanks to offer his noble gift to the nation, accompanied the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir George Cornewall Lewis and Lord Palmerston, to Rutland Gate, to view the collection. Mr. Sheepshanks of course was present, and on this occasion even more full of anecdote about the pictures than usual; the visitors paused before "Disappointed Love," struck by the deep gloom of the spot the painter had chosen for the scene of his story. Lord Palmerston remarked that it was a pity the girl was so ugly. "Yes," replied Mr. Sheepshanks, "one feels that the sooner she drowns herself the better. She always reminds me," he continued, "of the reply made by one of the judges who had tried a girl on the Northern circuit for destroying her child. Some lady who was deeply interested in the young woman's fate, met the judge at dinner, and ventured to say imploringly, did he mean to leave the poor girl to be hanged. 'Hanged, madam!' replied the irritated judge; 'hanged, madam, certainly; what else is she fit for, she is so confoundedly ugly?'" No doubt said to stop impertinent inquiries, but containing a great truth, that beauty goes far in the worst cases to win favour, and that in the

painter's language at least, ugliness is the expression of evil, as beauty is of goodness.

In Danby's next work, a subject which in the hands of most painters would have been sadly prosaic, we again see the poetry of his view of Nature brought prominently out. In 1822, he exhibited a picture of "Clearing up after a Shower;" it is on a thick panel, and is said to have been painted for a former mayor of Bristol, but is now the property of Mr. Coxe, of Pall Mall. A heavy cloud that has caused the just-passed shower, forms the grey background of the picture; on the left is a group of chestnut and other trees, their wetted leaves coming like emeralds off the dark cloud. Under the broad foliage some passengers have taken shelter, and in front, one aged and weary traveller is seated. He looks with an air of sadness on the happy sports of a group of boys, who—just let loose from school—are, boy-like, dancing and leaping with delight in the last droppings of the shower. The lads are on a sandy hill-side, which, with them also, is lighted by that wondrous sunlight following a heavy storm, when the rain has burnished all the foliage into gold and jewels, and it is contrasted with the leaden gloom of the retiring storm. The group is full of action, one boy throws his hat on high and leaps to catch it, one rushes after a butterfly, others are splashing water from the swimming runnels over a black dog, who enjoys the sport. The whole has a look of life, poetry, and truth, that lifts the work out of the region of paint. The figures are very well drawn, and remind us of those of Mulready in his early works, both as to manner and colour; or perhaps still more of Rippingille, himself a

Bristol artist, who in his early pictures painted subjects of humour and character in a manner that should have brought him great reputation. When Danby painted the "Sunshine after a Shower," he was still living at Bristol; his address given on the panel is, Woodfield Cottage, Cotham Lane, Bristol.

In 1824 Danby exhibited his "Sunset at Sea after a Storm." Forty years have passed since we saw this picture, yet we could almost describe from memory the lurid red of the setting sun, the broken waves of the subsiding storm, the few survivors of the wreck, alone on a raft on the limitless ocean; perhaps if we saw it now we might think it less impressive than its memory, yet it was a work that made the painter's reputation. Lawrence, the President, purchased it, it is said, at a much higher sum than the painter's price, and the world of artists and outer world of art-lovers were so struck with it, that in the next year, when he followed up his success by a still greater effort, "The Delivery of Israel out of Egypt, and Host of Pharaoh overwhelmed in the Red Sea," the Academy elected him an associate of their body, and the road to wealth and fame seemed to lie open before him.

The road to fame seemed open before him. Why, then, was he disappointed? why was Danby never elected to the full membership of the Academy? It is a story ill to tell, with faults, and no doubt recriminations, which the grave has partly closed over, and which we will not venture to re-open; suffice it to say, most emphatically, it was not for want of a sense of the great merit of the painter: not that his art was unappreciated by his brother members; hardly even that he made a false step involving

the council of that day in many annoyances, and bringing disgrace on art; since this might have been overlooked as time dimmed its recollection, had not Danby defended the fault to the last rather than regretted it. It would, indeed, have found no mention here had not the Academy been exposed to continual taunts on account of Danby's non-election. One who wrote during Danby's lifetime, and when the cause of his being overlooked in the Academy elections must have been well known, after abusing the Academy in vulgar language for its neglect of the painter, passes over his offence, merely saying, "An unhappy marriage and its concomitants shivered his household gods;" fine words and ambiguous, and so let them remain. There was evidently some obliquity of moral sense in Danby's mind in regard to this affair; since when the older members were passing away and younger men arising who would willingly have forgotten the past, and, as a man of true genius, sought to have him of their body, Danby was not one to let his faults slide out of memory, but was rather in the mood to justify and excuse himself, and to attribute his neglect to every possible cause but the right one.

It has been said that in "The Delivery of Israel out of Egypt," and in pictures of that class, Danby was but an imitator of Martin; and certainly it is true that the multitude of figures, and the vastness of the scene, have some of the characteristics of that master. But the grand ideality of his treatment was truly Danby's own, and was kindred to the feeling which had already produced "The Upas-tree," the "Sunset at Sea," and "Disappointed Love;" and was afterwards to inspire the "Solitude," the "Enchanted Island," "The Spring,"

and numerous other works that have little in common with those of Martin, except that they are ideal landscapes. Even in this "Passage of the Red Sea" there is far more of colour, far more of terrible grandeur, and less of the tricky and mechanical qualities of art than in Martin. Danby drew the figure better, had far more feeling for form, and we find little of the overstrained theatrical action which is so frequent in the figures of Martin. Of course, in such subjects by either painter where multitudes of figures have to be introduced, and the impression has to be made by numbers, rather than by passion and individual expression, the grandeur and solemnity of the general effect has to be relied on. In this we feel that Danby was far more of an artist than Martin. The effect in this picture is wonderfully attained; the pillar of fire looks like a real lambent flame, putting out the dim crimson sunset, lighting up the massive clouds and rising storm that is to dash the waves of the Red Sea over the hosts of Pharaoh.

The rupture between Danby and the Academy was one of the causes which made him leave England for the Continent in 1829. During the next eleven years he resided principally in Switzerland, boat-building, yachting on the Lake of Geneva, making studies and drawings, and painting some few works on commission. It is understood, also, that he visited Norway; but of this period and its labours we have little knowledge. Between 1829 and 1841, with only two exceptions, his name disappears, not only from the catalogue of the Royal Academy, but from that of the British Institution also. About 1841 Danby returned to London, residing for a time in its immediate neighbourhood. He again renewed

his contributions to the exhibitions, both at Trafalgar Square and Pall Mall; and his pictures exhibit the same characteristic style, the same power, and the same poetic feeling. Among the best works of this latter period are, "The Grave of the Excommunicated," 1846; "The Evening Gun," 1848; "Spring," 1850; and "A Wild Seashore," 1853. Such works quite upheld Danby's former reputation, although occasionally his pictures were fatiguing in execution, and the intention not always realized. In 1847, he retired to Shell House, near Exmouth, to enjoy the neighbourhood of the sea and the rich foliage of Devonshire.

The members of the Academy have few opportunities of meeting one another, except on their assemblages for business; and the varnishing days have always been much prized, as almost the only occasion of bringing together, in unrestrained freedom, those who otherwise might have remained almost strangers. Danby usually came up to these meetings, and was cordially received by those who loved his art. But there was a remnant of mistrust on the part of the elder members, and on his own of the sense of neglect, and, as he considered it, ill-treatment —that his just claims, *as an artist*, to membership, were overlooked—and he never seemed really at home at these meetings. From the earlier days of the Academy there had existed an Academicians' Club, the members dining together at the Thatched House at stated intervals. Only members were eligible for election; but in 1853 its rules were revised, and the associates, as a body, were invited to join the club, Danby among the rest. Premising that a ballot was required at all elections, an extract from Danby's answer to a member who wished to

propose him will show his irritation at the position he held, and also how completely he seemed unaware that any misconduct of his own was the original cause of his claims being overlooked. "I shall," he says, "ever consider it my greatest pride to associate with all its" (the Academy's) "members; but I have held the doubtful honour of being at the head of the 'list of associates' for so many years, (the result of prejudice and illiberality, or want of merit on my part,) that I should fear to subject my name to the additional distinction of rejection in the Academicians' Club. However I may desire the honour and pleasure of joining in those convivial meetings of our brother artists (under these circumstances), nothing less than a decided invitation from *them* would induce me to intrude myself into a more prominent position than I hold, with sufficient pride and perfect content, at present." The breach was not to be healed. His early error had separated him from his brother artists; and he remained apart from them until his death, which took place at Exmouth, the 9th of February, 1861.

Whatever were his failings as a man, as an artist Danby should take high rank. His pictures are true poetry as compared with the prose—noble prose it may be—of many who have great reputation as landscape painters. The very list of his works shows the imaginative aim of all his labours. Of forty-six pictures, mostly landscape in their general character, registered in the Academy catalogues between 1817 and 1861, there are only three whose titles bear any relation to actual scenery; and of the large number exhibited during the same interval at the Institution, only one.

Danby's art was totally opposed to that of the realistic

school. He was not one to sit down to imitate Nature leaf by leaf, to photograph her maze of branches, to count the myriad blades of grass, or the wild-flowers she strews with so lavish a hand. His effort was rather to combine the large general truths of Nature—her grandest, saddest aspects, with the imaginative and ideal creations of poetry. Take, as an example, his picture of the coming forth of "Spring," a large and important landscape, formerly the property of Mr. Birch of Birmingham. In the present day, the painter of such a subject would sit down in his hut or tent to paint the bursting buds as they clothe the naked sprays of winter; choosing of course some actual scene that strikes him as beautiful or characteristic: and then, without alteration, omission or change, copying conscientiously the details before him, give us at the best, truth, but not poetry.

Danby, on the contrary, choosing from a store of materials the landscape scenery best adapted to display the sweet attributes of spring, clothes it with the hues of morn, the spring of day; groups together the trees that by their varied periods of bud or blossom, mark the morning of the coming year. The chestnut, already robed with leaves, and ornamented with its thousand cones of blossom; the aspen, from which the catkin has just fallen, still yellow with its opening leaves. Apart from these a small group of gloomy firs, as it were the last relics of winter passed away; under the trees, the sward, rich with its early green, and enamelled with a wealth of flowers, is banded with the long golden rays of the early sun; rising mists unveil the distant hills, glittering with many falling streams from spring-tide showers. The broad expanse of clear water, around

the islet on which the trees are growing, reflects from its pure surface the fresh sky and rolling clouds. In the foreground, one with music and singing heralds a group of fair women, bearing the young Spring aloft. She is scattering flowers from her lap to the laughing Loves who gambol in her train. The whole is a sweet idyll—a song of spring-time without words.

Danby's execution was far less mechanical than Martin's, and certainly more varied; but the labour was rather too apparent, and the manner somewhat tedious, the surface too smooth and polished. He seems to have used some vehicle, such as gold-size, that has darkened with age, and in some cases has caused the darks to crack. This, with the glassy surface of his pictures, renders them very obscure when hung in the dark rooms to which too many of our fine works are condemned; but they well repay examination, and grow upon us the more the longer we view them. As an artist he ranks far above Martin, and dying, he left no one to succeed him in ideal landscape.

CHAPTER XIII.

ROBERTS, NASMYTH, BONINGTON, AND MÜLLER.

David Roberts, R.A.—His Birth—And Apprenticeship to a Painter and Decorator—Tries successfully Scene-Painting—Comes to London—Engaged as Scene-Painter at Drury Lane—Exhibits Easel Pictures—Joins the Society of British Artists on its Foundation—Becomes President—Leaves the Society—Elected into the Royal Academy—Travels on the Continent—And in the East—Popularity of his Art—Visits Italy—His Views of "London from the Thames"—Sudden Death—His published Works—Opinions upon his Art—*Patrick Nasmyth*—The Son of a Landscape Painter—His early love of Nature—Comes to London at the age of twenty—Falls into Dissipated Habits—Paints English Scenery with great Truth—*Richard Parkes Bonington*—Difficulties of his Early Life—Tries Art in Paris—Gets his Art-Education there—His Genius and Early Success—Premature Death—His Great Talent for Art—*William J. Müller*—His Early Genius—Leads him to Art—Travels in Germany, Switzerland, and Italy—Exhibits in London—Then visits Greece and Egypt—Joins the Expedition to Lycia—On his return settles in London—Finds Patronage—But Disappointed—His Illness and Death.

It is not intended to include in our work every painter who has produced meritorious pictures. Many have taken good rank in art whose works are a delight and a pleasure, yet possess no marked character of their own. It is only those who have enlarged the scope of British art by the originality of their manner, their choice of subject or novelty of execution, that claim a particular notice at our hands. Such a one was *David Roberts, R.A.*, whose works we are about to review. He was born at Stockbridge near Edinburgh, on the 24th October, 1796. His parents, though in a humble

sphere of life, gave him, as is usual with his countrymen, an education beyond that which would have been the lot of a youth of the same class in England. Before the usual age he was apprenticed to a well-known decorator and house painter in Edinburgh, whom he served for seven years, learning all the trade processes —the rapid execution of the decorator, and the mere mechanical appliances which shorten labour. This gave him great readiness of hand, as well as a simple and somewhat matter-of-fact mode of using his pigments, which he retained during life.

By an innate feeling for art, Roberts was easily led to apply his trade-knowledge to something beyond house-painting, picking out mouldings, or dashing in a frieze; for, shortly after his apprenticeship was completed, we learn that he had tried scene painting, and painted his first scene for a company of strolling players at Carlisle. Thus early the young painter found the true bent of his genius, the source of his future power. Perhaps with the varied practice of his 'prentice training, completed before he was nineteen, he was better prepared for the branch of art he adopted, than half the artists of his age, when schools of design were unknown in England and schools of art gave little instruction in the use of the brush and the palette. It is true that Roberts entered as a student at the Trustees' Academy, when Andrew Wilson was at its head—a master under whom many of the Scotch artists who afterwards attained eminence were formed—but Roberts was either satisfied with what he knew and preferred his own methods, or he found it necessary to-seek employment for his maintenance. He remained in the school only one week,

made a drawing or two from the extremities, and then left, to trust henceforth to a ready hand, a self-sustained temper, and the rough knowledge he possessed; taking nature for his mistress and teacher.

He was first engaged in 1820 in scene painting at the Glasgow and Edinburgh Theatres, and then with an introduction from the principal of the latter, he made his way to London, where he soon found employment in the scene-room at Drury Lane Theatre, and in 1822 was appointed scene painter. For this art his great rapidity of execution peculiarly fitted him, and he soon distinguished himself: he produced at a very short notice the characteristic scenes for Mr. Charles Matthews' *At Home*. But scene painting did not satisfy him; he aimed at distinction as a painter in oil. He had, in 1820 and the following year, sent pictures to the Edinburgh Exhibition; and in 1824 his works first appear on the walls of a London Exhibition. He joined the Society of British Artists in Suffolk Street, of which he was one of the foundation members, and in that year sent to their first exhibition three small views, "Dryburgh Abbey," and "The East Front" and "South Transept of Melrose Abbey." In the same year he strayed to France and visited the coast towns of Dieppe, Havre and Rouen, in pursuit of a class of art the scenic picturesqueness of which had already possessed him. In 1825 he exhibited with the new society, two views of "Notre Dame, Rouen," the west front and the south transept; the entrance to the Church of St. Martin, in the same city, and "St. Jacques, Dieppe;" and at the same time contributed to the British Institution a small picture of Newby Abbey, Dumfriesshire.

The next year Roberts exhibited his first work at the Royal Academy, "A View of Rouen Cathedral;" and at the British Institution one picture; at Suffolk Street, three. In 1828 he produced a work of another character, "The Departure of the Israelites out of Egypt," which he sent to Suffolk Street. Then during the next seven years he sent only one work to the Royal Academy, and occasionally exhibited a picture at the British Institution. He sent the best works from his easel to the young society in Suffolk Street, to which he appears to have attached himself; became in 1830 its vice-president, and in 1831 its president, and was in both years a large supporter of its exhibitions. In 1832 he ceased to fill the office of president; in the three following years he exhibited only one work with the society; and in 1836 resigned his membership, paying such fines and share of liabilities as were due from him; yet he exhibited two works there the following year, perhaps as an expression of good will, and then his connection with the society entirely ceased.

He had been attracted by the greater distinction which the exhibitions at the Royal Academy afforded. He was rapidly advancing in art, and his interests led him to seek admission to that body, of which he was elected an associate in 1838, and an academician in 1841. He had already, in the pursuit of his art, travelled in France, Belgium, Germany, Spain, Morocco, and Holland. Then seeking novelty in more distant lands, in the autumn of 1838 he started for Egypt and Syria, and for the ten following years his works, with only an occasional return to his former subjects, were Eastern. He was now at the height of his reputation,

exhibiting almost exclusively at the Royal Academy, and producing his best pictures. Among them, in 1840, "The Greek Church of the Holy Nativity at Bethlehem;" "The Statues of the Vocal Memnon on the Plain of Thebes—Sunrise." In 1841, "Jerusalem, from the Mount of Olives, with the Return of the Pilgrims;" "The Portico of the Temple of Dendera, in Upper Egypt." In 1843, "Ruins of the Island of Philoe, Nubia;" "Gateway of the Great Temple, Baalbec." In 1844, "Pyramids of Ghizeh—Sunset." In 1849, "The Destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans."

In 1851 he visited Italy for the first time, returning by the way of Vienna, and from that year to 1860 his themes were Italian; the decaying grandeurs of Rome, Venice, Pisa, and Milan were the inspirations of his pencil. Then as age crept on and the desire of travel was satiated, he found his subjects nearer home, and commenced a series of pictures for Mr. Lucas (one of the contractors for the Exhibition Building, 1862), "London from the River Thames." This was a fine theme, and well suited to his pencil. It was commenced at a time when the banks of the river afforded the most picturesque combinations; these, if they are now rapidly disappearing, to give place to the nobler works of the architect, yet have cherished associations in connection with our great city, which we rejoice to see preserved in the works of such a painter. Of this series, Roberts exhibited in 1862, "The South Elevation of the New Palace at Westminster, from the Horseferry;" and "A View from Westminster Bridge, embracing St. Paul's, Somerset House, and the Temple;" "The Embarkation of the Lord Mayor from Blackfriars' Bridge;" and a second

"View of the New Palace at Westminster;" and in 1863, "St. Paul's from the River Thames, looking West," and another "View, looking East." He was painting on another of the series on the morning of the 25th November, 1864; towards the afternoon of that day he left his home apparently in perfect health, but was seized with an apoplectic attack in the street, was brought home speechless and unconscious, and died the same evening.

Roberts's choice of subject, its picturesque treatment, and the characteristic groups with which his pictures were filled, eminently fitted his art for publication. He made, for four years, drawings for the *Landscape Annual.* In 1837 he published, in lithography, his *Picturesque Sketches in Spain;* and in 1842, commenced his well-known work, *Roberts's Sketches in the Holy Land and Syria,* which was completed in 1849. In 1859, he published *Italy, Classical, Historical, and Picturesque.* The development of the art of lithography, and particularly chromo-lithography, and the talented artists who assisted him in these publications, greatly tended to their popularity. They had, as they deserved, an extensive sale; and from them and his paintings, Roberts realized a considerable fortune.

It is hardly correct to call Roberts a landscape painter, in the sense in which we should apply the term to Turner or Constable. The art as practised by Roberts was essentially scenic; his pictures almost always consist of buildings, towns, or ruined cities; of exteriors or interiors of palaces, cathedrals, or temples; these he treated less with a view to those atmospheric effects which are the delight of the true landscape painter, than

with the desire to give us an idea of the splendour and magnificence of his structures, by simplicity and largeness of parts, by breadth of daylight, and by enriching his subjects with groups of accessories. His early labours for the theatres formed his style, and he clung to it through life; or, might we not rather say, that his art was naturally fitted for the subjects on which he began to exercise it? He had no sympathy with the imitative or realistic school; in all the hundreds of sketches by his hand, there is not one that indicates an attempt at individualized realization. Broad, simple and very conventional, with the details suggested rather than given, his pictures charm us by their onceness, their direct appeal to the eye, and the extreme ease with which they are executed. The colour is agreeable, though not like nature, but generalized to what he thought best suited for the scenic display of the class of subjects he loved to paint; so that whether his buildings are on the banks of the Clyde or the Thames, the Nile or the Tiber, there is a sameness of tint and hue pervading them which is quite independent of the dingy tones of our own city, the damps of Venice, or the clear sharpness of the dry atmosphere of the East. While other painters excruciate over crumbling stones, stained by time or storms, or mossed with age, aiming to give the very texture of decay, Roberts cared little for such imitative renderings, laying in the masses in the general colour of light, with little alteration of tints or tone. His conduct of his picture was very simple, it being little more than an enlarged sketch. He saw his subject complete from the commencement—the quantities and masses—even the general effect of the figures which were to enrich

it, being laid in with the dead colouring. On the clean canvas he drew very carefully with his pencil all the lines and forms of his work, using the ruler as freely as an architect would; such ornamental details as he intended to admit were also boldly sketched, as were the figures, both near and distant; the perspective of his work being most fully and carefully considered. Over this pencil outline the general masses of local colour and shadow were laid in with a full pencil and a facile hand, rather negative in tint than otherwise; the general light, shade and colour of the groups of figures being laid in at the same time.

It is to be observed that, consisting as his pictures generally do, of large masses of cool stone colour, the figures form an important part of the composition; enabling the painter to introduce strong contrasts of light, dark, and colour to give life and animation to the work, and to draw the eye at once to the principal object—the altar, the tomb, or monument, which forms the point of the picture. Up to his intention he drew figures easily and well, and had a picturesque eye to groups and processions of priests or soldiery; though it must be confessed that they remind us somewhat of stage supernumeraries, and green-room properties. His first painting when completed, showed much of the firm pencilling with which he outlined his work, still remaining; in the second, the masses are again gone over with semi-solid tints to break them up, to enrich them, and to bring the parts together; the details and ornamental parts are touched cleanly, and the forms defined, sometimes by the use of the end of the brush-stick, drawing firm lines of light in the wet colour. The drawing of

the figures completed, and the colours and draperies enriched, then a few slight after-glazings and touches to heighten the lights completed the picture.

Roberts's manner throughout his career varied but little. Latterly he no doubt obtained greater facility, and learned exactly how little would suffice for the expression of his work, how much he might afford to leave out. Throughout his career his pictures have a marked equality in manner, in colour, and in excellence. This was curiously illustrated in the 600 or 700 sketches in oil and water colour that were exhibited after his death. The earliest and the latest had hardly an interval between them: he seems never to have had a difficulty, perfectly accomplishing what he intended, never rising beyond himself, but never falling below.

We do not see in his works an effort after anything new or uncommon, either in effect or process, an effort to get beyond himself, resulting as such efforts do in other men, at times in failures, and at times in startling successes. In his art and his method of painting Roberts was like Canaletti; in the choice of architecture and buildings as the subjects of his pencil; in his love of a firm, decided outline and the use of the ruler; in precision of hand, and the ready way in which he touched in his accessories; and the scenic groups of figures, &c., with which he animated his pictures. He was less precise than the Venetian, less minute in his details, but also less conventional. Canaletti was very correct in delineating all the objects that came within the scope of his pictures, in which we can note every building as it stands in the city of the sea; Roberts suppressed such details, and hid such parts of the scene as he thought undesirable.

The views on the Thames by Scott or James give every wharf and every shed as it stood on the Thames' bank; but Roberts, in the series of "Views of the River," which were among the latest of his works, suppressed much, and hid more by shadow, or by the river craft he introduced. Thus in the "Sketches of Victoria Tower," all the group of picturesque sheds that cluster at its base are gone; the same is the case in that subject where the Cathedral towers above the wharf of St. Paul's; but by this treatment he increased the magnificence of our native river at the expense of its picturesque truth.

Though Roberts had studied decorative painting, and all his subjects were architectural, we are not aware that he had more architectural knowledge than is derived from his mere observation of such works, as a painter. Yet so easily does the world give a man of talent credit for more than he possesses, that Roberts was considered an architectural authority; his brethren were accustomed to defer to him on such matters, and he was placed on more than one important committee as a judge to award prizes and premiums. In some respects, he was well qualified: as an arbiter he possessed good common sense, he was very honest, and had sufficient of the dogged resolution of his countrymen to hold his own opinion against even the titled and the great; but his real knowledge of architecture was that of the scene painter, or at the best, of an architectural draughtsman; and of the science of that art, of fitness or constructive utility he was wholly ignorant.

The art of *Patrick Nasmyth* is a complete contrast to that of his countryman Roberts, being chiefly remarkable for its homely imitative truth, and the absence of all

accident or effect. His father, Alexander Nasmyth, was a pupil of Allan Ramsay's, and became a landscape painter of much merit. He was born in 1758, and settled in the Scotch capital, where he died in 1840. Young Patrick was born in Edinburgh in 1786, and early showed a great love of Nature; playing truant from school to idle in the sunny fields, and to sketch, or attempt to sketch, the scenery of that beautiful neighbourhood. As he had little aptitude for learning, and paid little attention to his books, he was gradually allowed to take his own course, and to follow his disposition for art. His father no doubt helped his studies, and seems indeed to have made all his children love and follow art. Young Nasmyth came to London at the age of twenty, where his talents were soon appreciated and his works found ready purchasers. In 1812 we find him for the first time exhibiting at the Royal Academy "A View of Loch Katrine in Perthshire;" but it is by more simple and rustic scenery that he is generally known, and his best landscapes are essentially English.

In early life an injury to his right hand obliged him to learn to use his left in painting, and when about seventeen years of age, having had the misfortune to sleep in a damp bed, it brought on an illness which resulted in deafness, by which, and his want of taste for literature, he was shut out from many sources of enjoyment; and in his solitude early addicted himself to habits of excess indulged in with low company. We are not told where he obtained his knowledge of Dutch art, but his works show that he founded himself on that school, and imitated the execution, while he adopted the class of subjects of Hobbema and Wynants; delighting in lane

scenes, hedgerows, the skirts of commons, and village suburbs, and choosing the dwarf oak with its contorted limbs and scrubby foliage, in preference to other trees. He is said latterly to have painted to live rather than lived to paint, working from necessity and to supply his actual wants; yet he painted to the last, and his last illness arose from an attack of influenza caught in sketching, which his frame, enfeebled by his bad habits, was not able to resist. He died at Lambeth on the 17th of August, 1831, during a thunder-storm, which he was, at his own request, raised in bed to contemplate. He was buried in St. Mary's Church.

His art was popular at first, from its likeness to the Dutch school then in high favour with art patrons. This school had some small tendency to lead our young painters to a closer imitation of Nature; but with all its excellencies, and it has many, it has little originality. Nasmyth's manner is rather mean, his foliage over-detailed, and his work somewhat black in the shadows, but the execution is solid and satisfactory, and his paintings stand well; painting in rather a low tone, his skies look fresh and brilliant, but they show the simplest effects of cloud and daylight. No tendency to poetry or invention is found in his works; but he wisely confined himself to painting that in which his strength lay. The oaks of Epping, Penge, or Penshurst, the lane scenery of Norwood or Dulwich, were his subjects, and these he rendered with simplicity, force, and truth.

The genius of *Richard Parkes Bonington* led him to the same class of art as Roberts, and would probably, had he lived, have led him to higher excellence. He was born at Arnold, a village near Nottingham, on the 25th

October, 1801. His grandfather was the governor of the county gaol at Nottingham, and on his death was succeeded by his son, the father of the painter; who seems to have been one of that unhappy class born to be the torment of others. He soon lost his appointment in the gaol, and then, with what previous acquirements we know not, attempted to earn a living as a portrait painter; he also published some prints of little merit in coloured aquatint. His wife meanwhile kept a school.

Under such influences the young painter was passing his boyhood. His first inclinations were divided between art and the drama, and his future career for a time hung in the balance, when his father's imprudence, love of low company and violent political opinions, broke up his wife's school, which was probably the mainstay of the family, and they fled to France and made their way to Paris. Young Bonington was then fifteen years of age; art seemed to lay open to him, and with the most limited means, if any, he gained permission to study in the Louvre, and commenced most diligently to improve himself in art as his profession. He made rapid progress; though we know little of him in his student days. He became a pupil at the Institute, drew in the atelier of Baron Gros, and gained a gold medal in Paris for one of his marine views. About the year 1822 he went to Italy, and we have some fine subjects by him, which have the true odour of that glowing land.

He was rising into reputation in Paris; his works both in oil and water colours, were sought after and commanded large prices. He was even claimed by the French artists as belonging to their school, in which he

had surely developed his genius, while he was unknown in his own country. In 1826 some longing desire of fame among the artists of his own land, induced him to send for exhibition to the British Institution two views on the French coast, and their high merit received the most cordial recognition. Gratified by this, he sent in 1827 to the Royal Academy "A Scene on the French Coast," and the following year three subjects, "Henry III. of France in Council, Surrounded by his Pet Dogs and Parrots," "A Coast Scene," and "The Grand Canal and Salute Church, Venice." He had now attained a reputation in both capitals; his genius attracted commissions which overwhelmed him. Sketching imprudently in the sun in Paris, brought on brain fever, and subsequent severe illness. He came to London for advice, but was seized by rapid consumption, which terminated his life on the 23rd April, 1828. He was buried in a vault at St. James's Church, Pentonville. We are indebted to a writer in *Arnold's Library of the Fine Arts* for these facts; but some other accounts say that Bonington died in Paris, which we think improbable, as he certainly came here for advice, and was buried in London.

Bonington's works were marked by their originality. He was a master of the figure, which he painted with much grace. He succeeded equally in his marine and coast scenes, and his picturesque architecture of the Italian cities. His drawing in these various classes was characteristic; his light and shade powerful, his colour rich and pleasing. His works differed from those of his countrymen mostly from the simple breadth of the masses, both of light and of shadow, and from his appreciation of the change which shadow induced on

the local colour; the handling and execution is very broad and flat, and a happy union of the best qualities of the French and English schools: it is curious that the only marked impression made on the French school by English art has been through two landscape painters, Bonington and Constable. It is difficult to say to which particular class of art Bonington might have devoted himself had he lived. His genius promised success in all. His influence in art was already felt, particularly in water colours. A series of his works were published in lithograph, and his drawings—sold by Sotheby after his death—realized 1,200*l.* His appearance was that of a man of genius. We are told that he was affectionate and generous, with a countenance bearing an expression of melancholy thought.

We must include in this chapter *William J. Müller*, whose art possessed much in character with that of both Roberts and Bonington. His father was a German, who settled at Bristol, was curator of the Museum there, and was known as the publisher of some works of a scientific character. In this city the painter-son was born in 1812. From his birth he had the character of a genius. He early showed a taste for botany and natural history, and was an apt scholar; but his strongest inclination was to drawing. He received some instruction from J. B. Pyne, a fellow-townsman; but self-reliant, he soon left him, and commenced to study from nature alone.

In 1833-34, he visited, for his improvement, Germany, Switzerland and Italy, and, then returning to Bristol, resumed his profession there, and worked for some time without much encouragement. In 1836, he exhibited for the first time in London, sending to the Academy,

"Peasants on the Banks of the Rhine, Waiting for the Ferry Boat," and to the Society of British Artists, "Venice," and "Hoar Frost—Autumn Scene near Monmouth." He exhibited for the next three years with the British Artists alone. In 1838, probably induced by the example of Roberts, he visited Greece and then Egypt, and, with his sketch-book stored with rich material, returned again to Bristol. He made but a short stay, however, in his native city, for about the end of 1839, he had settled himself in London. Here he soon found purchasers for his works, which he was able to finish with great rapidity, realizing the fruits of his travels. He appears again as an exhibitor in 1840, contributing to the Royal Academy "Athens, from the Road to Marathon," and "Ruins at Gornon, Egypt—Sunset;" and to the Society of British Artists, "The Memnons—Sunrise." The following year he sent to the Academy his "Slave Market, Egypt," and "The Sphynx;" and also published his *Picturesque Sketches of the Age of Francis the First.*

Soon after Government projected the Expedition to Lycia. This he solicited and obtained permission to accompany, and that he might be at full liberty to follow his own art, he defrayed his own expenses; making the voyage from his own resources. He found abundant materials peculiarly suited to his art, and on his return home painted "A Turkish Burial Ground," and a "Zanthian Tent Scene," both highly meritorious works. But he complained that he was not appreciated; that his paintings were badly hung at the British Institution, and that he fared no better at the Royal Academy. He returned to Bristol dispirited and unwell, and was advised that his

heart was diseased. His merits were acknowledged; he had many commissions to execute, but he was unable to work. His disorder gained ground; he was weakened by repeated attacks of bleeding from the nose, and though he continued to paint occasionally, his health gradually succumbed, and he died at Bristol on the 8th September, 1845. He had that year made his largest contribution to the Royal Academy :—"Great Canon formerly belonging to the Knights Templars at Rhodes," "Head of a Cingari—Zanthus," "Burial Ground, Smyrna," "Tent Scene, Cingaris playing to a Turkish Family—Zanthus," "Turkish Merchants, with Camels, Passing the River—Valley of Zanthus."

Müller had attained a large and simple manner of his own, and rather a glittering feeling for colour, without a full sense of space, keeping, or distance. For instance, his "Baggage Waggon," the property of Mr. T. Ashton, of Manchester, which is one of his best works, is fine in composition, and sparkling in colour; the figures are appropriate, and lead the eye well into the picture; but the various distances seem a little too much cut out, and have not those refinements of space which belong to our best landscape painters, and of which in the works of Turner, Müller must have had so many examples before his eyes. His pictures of Eastern scenery are truthful, and carry us away to other climes: his "Rhodes" has a truly Eastern look, and if a little too white, is broad and luminous, and a work that could hardly have been painted, had not the painter studied on the spot the peculiar aspects of Nature in the Mediterranean isles.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SCHOOL OF WATER-COLOUR PAINTERS.

John James Chalon, R.A.—Commences Art as a Painter in Oil—Takes up Water Colours—Joins the Water-Colour Society—Secedes, to seek Academy Honours—His eventual Success—Opinion upon his Talent—Description of his Art—*Thomas Heaphy*—His Apprenticeship—Art-Studies—Early Marriage—Practices as Portrait Painter—Occasionally exhibits Subject-pictures—His "Fish-market"—Follows the Army in the Peninsula—Paints the Officers' Portraits—The Duke of Wellington and his Staff—Promotes the Foundation of the Society of British Artists—And the new Water-Colour Society—Opinion upon his Art—*David Cox*—His Childhood—And Beginning in Art—Becomes Scene Painter—Tries Water-Colour Painting—His earnest Studies and Success—His Writings on Art—Manner of Painting—Its Individuality and particular Merits—The "Welsh Funeral"—*Samuel Prout*—Sickly Boyhood—Early Training—Engagement with Mr. Britton—Drawings for him—Joins the Water-Colour Society—His Publications—His Style, Manner, and Choice of Subject described—*Peter De Wint*—His Parentage—Commences the Study of Art—Hilton, R.A., his Fellow-student and Friend—Exhibits with the Water-Colour Society—His Art Career—And Art described—Manner of Painting—*George Fennel Robson*—His Art Teaching—Early Success—Study in the Highlands—Love for Mountain Scenery—Progress in Art—Sudden Death—*William Hunt*—His Birth-place—Attachment to Art—Apprenticed to John Varley—Early Study—Long Art Career—Death—Character of his Art—And Manner of Execution—*Copley Vandyke Fielding*—Son of an Artist—Educated for Art—Pupil of Varley—Member and President of Water-Colour Society—Effect of Teaching upon his Art—Opinion upon his Powers.

THE foundation of the Society of Painters in Water Colours was the means of establishing the art on a firm footing; and while uniting its members, made them emulous of progress, and zealous for the interests of the body to which they belonged; which was for many years

the sole representative of water-colour art. Their exhibitions brought their works and their talents fully before the public, free from the overpowering contrast with the works of the oil painters; from their exclusiveness they were always attractive and never wearied; and confined to their own members, the Society was spared the loud cries from without of works rejected or ill-placed, which the larger policy of the Royal Academy entails upon its members. For a time, indeed, there were factions in the Water-Colour Society, and opinions differed as to the exclusion of all works but their own, and as to the policy of admitting only works in pure water colours. But these dissensions soon ended. The discussions to which they gave rise, ended in confirming, as the true one, the original object of the Society; and as a body of painters in water colours, they have maintained for many years their high position, and numbered among their members most of the best painters of the school. Some two or three men of talent, it is true, never joined the Society, and there were some seceders from the body. This chapter is not, therefore, devoted exclusively to its members; indeed the artist with whom it commences was a seceder, who turned early in his career from the practice of water colour to oil.

John James Chalon, R.A., was born at Geneva in 1778; he was the elder brother of Alfred Edward Chalon, a distinguished painter, in our notice of whom we have already told such particulars of the family as were known to us, and of the early days of John James, of whom we are now about to speak. His first appearance as an artist was in 1800, when he exhibited "Banditti at their Repast," at the Royal Academy,

followed, but not till 1803, by two pictures, "A Landscape," and "Fortune-telling." In 1804 he exhibited two landscapes, and in 1805 four. Up to this time John Chalon's exhibited works had been in oil; but in 1806 he became a "fellow-exhibitor" of the Water-Colour Society, and then turned to water-colour art. In 1808 he was elected a member of the Society, and in that year exhibited, with other pictures, his "Shorwell Rocks on the Wye," a work which gave him a distinguished place as a water colour painter. It was exhibited in the International Exhibition of 1862. On the alterations which took place in 1813, when it was proposed to dissolve the Water-Colour Society, John Chalon was among the members who seceded. He had up to that time contributed one painting each year to the Royal Academy Exhibition; and in the five following years he sent two works yearly—except in 1816, when he exhibited only one fine work, full of interest, "A Scene in Plymouth Sound in August, 1815—the Bellerophon with Napoleon on Board," which he presented to the gallery at Greenwich Hospital, where it is now accessible to the public.

It is probable that John Chalon's withdrawal from the Water-Colour Society may have been influenced by his desire to become a member of the Royal Academy. In 1812 his brother Alfred was elected an associate, and many of the contemporary artists thought even more highly of John's abilities than of Alfred's. When in 1816 the younger brother was advanced to full honours, John made great efforts to appear well on the Academy's walls, sending his "Napoleon on board the Bellerophon." The brothers were deeply attached to one another, and

having attained rank in art himself, Alfred was most anxious for his brother's advancement also; but although he exhibited from time to time works of great merit, it was not until 1827 that John Chalon was elected an associate, and he continued in that rank until 1841.

It has been said of John Chalon, and this within ten years of his death, that "during a long life, he painted a multitude of pictures mostly in water colours," so little is really known of his art; yet Leslie who knew him well, and was at least a competent judge, thought him a man of great and original powers. "Few painters," he said, "had so great a range of talent." Moreover, his principal works were in oil, although he was in early life an accomplished water-colour painter; and we can admit that, if invention were the great qualification of an artist, few better deserved that title than John James Chalon. For nearly half a century he was a member of the Sketching Club, and a constant attendant at their meetings, and those who look over the collections made by the several members, will give a high place for fertility of idea, for rapid execution, and for apt illustration of the subject, to the sketches by his hand. In his more important works, had his colouring been more effective and his execution equal to his originality, he would not have been classed disparagingly as a painter in water colours; nor would his best works have remained on his own walls to be disposed of after his brother's death, at prices wholly inadequate to their value. But a certain dryness and solidity, a want of interchange in executive processes, and a tendency, at times, to blackness, obscured the higher qualities his works unquestionably possess. Nevertheless, some of his earlier works are of

very high merit; such is the "Village Gossips," exhibited in 1815, now in the South Kensington Museum, an upright landscape with a fine mass of trees and houses bordering a pond; these, with the whole foreground, are in shadow; under the trees is a group of horses also in shadow, contrasting with a gleam of light on farm and stack-yard in the mid-distance. This large mass of shadow, although solidly painted, is very luminous, and by no means sacrificed to the lights. It is an evidence of Chalon's just taste that he has resisted the obvious temptation to introduce a ray of light on the three figures of the Gossips in the extreme foreground, and has with great skill treated them subdued and in shade: a painter of less originality would have resorted to the trick of making them in sunlight, their bright lights and colours contrasting with the large mass of neutral shade.

Another picture of about the same time was exhibited at the International Exhibition in 1862, and called "The Gravel Pit," (No. 205), though this is perhaps not its original name. It is, on the whole, one of John Chalon's best works, broad, simple, and manly in treatment, square and facile in handling, and free from faults of colour that overtook him in later practice: it is really a finely-coloured picture; the sky is a luminous mass of rifting clouds through which a sun-ray breaks and lights up lines on the distant plain, while the flat cutting of the steep side of the gravel-pit is lighted with warm rich sunlight, telling against the neutral green in the foreground, which is all in shade; two or three female figures at the foot of a tree on the right tell like jewels against the negative masses.

Another very masterly work by the painter is a "View of Hastings," exhibited in 1819, and now at South Kensington Museum. It is a grand treatment of coast scenery, free from those littlenesses of detail so often resorted to by incompetent artists. A storm is rising over the sea, and the fishing-boats are running to shore —one on the crest of a breaking wave is just about to be beached; the hill beyond the town is in full light, and over it, a large mass of cumulous cloud, luminous with golden orange light; the moment chosen being just before the driving rain-cloud closes over the last sun rays. The waves beyond the surf are broken, chopping, and restless; the town, partly obscured by a dark shadow from the storm-cloud, and partly lit up by the last gleam of the sun, tells now light upon dark, and again dark upon light, on the grey masses of the cloud, so that the light and dark are happily intermingled and carried with great skill through the picture: the relations between the dark objects on sea and shore, and the light of the sky, are very truthfully rendered. It is painted with too solid a palette, and the waves are too edgy; but it is a fine, manly work.

Chalon's faults of blackness were more apparent in his water colours than in his oil pictures. The work already alluded to, "Shorwell Rocks on the Wye," and "A River Scene in Devonshire," the latter in the South Kensington Museum, are specimens of his best art in this medium; they are simple in execution, fresh and bold in manner, and of the Girtin and Varley school, rather than with any leaning towards Turner. Of his other large landscapes in water colour, of which there are two in the same collection, it suffices to say that they are heavy, black,

and overwrought; and, though fine as compositions, have rather the appearance of being copied from Berghem's oil pictures, than endowed with the lightness and facility of water colours. John Chalon made beautiful studies from Nature, both in oil and water colours; and had it been the fashion in his day to paint direct from Nature, would have produced very fine imitative landscapes. In his early days much of his time was given up to teaching, and although he was an exhibitor for fifty years his works are comparatively few.

In 1847, while walking with his brother, he was suddenly seized with paralysis, and lost the power of supporting himself. His disorder gradually increased; and with his physical, his mental powers also declined. The attentions of his younger brother were unremitting, until his tedious illness terminated fatally on the 14th November, 1854, when in his seventy-sixth year. In his habits and manners John Chalon was entirely English; frank, hearty, sociable, full of wit and anecdotes of art, a musician and a lover of music. For forty years the two brothers were the life and support of the Sketching Society, which seems to have drooped as the health of John Chalon declined, and not to have survived his absence. The centre of a group of distinguished men of their own profession, the brothers, inseparable during a long life, were equally steadfast in their friendships and hospitality.

In our list of artists, who in the early part of the century obtained reputation as painters in water colours, *Thomas Heaphy* must be included as one of the best of those who painted figure subjects. He was born in London, in the parish of Cripplegate, about 1779-80.

His father, John Heaphy, was descended from a French family, who in the seventeenth century had settled in the eastern part of London, where his countrymen who fled on the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, had introduced the manufacture of silk, which then took root in our city. John Heaphy took Katharine Gerard, a Frenchwoman, to wife, and the taste characteristic of the race, descended to their son Thomas, who early in life showed a predilection for art. His father apprenticed the boy to a dyer, perhaps hoping that his art-feeling might tend to improve the silk dyes of the district; but the occupation was very distasteful to the youth, and his evident dislike led to his indentures being cancelled within a few months, and a new direction given to his life. He was now articled to an engraver of the name of Meadows, who obtained some reputation by engraving book plates from the designs of Richard Westall. There was, at the time we are writing, about 1796-7, an art-school of some repute in Finsbury, conducted by a painter of the name of Simpson, who numbered among his pupils Thomas Uwins, Ross the father of Sir William, and others who afterwards became known in the arts. Heaphy, who was more inclined to painting than to engraving, after his master's work was finished, attended in the evening very regularly at Simpson's school, and studied diligently with the view of fitting himself for future practice as an artist.

Before his apprenticeship to Meadows expired, Heaphy, with the improvidence characteristic of artists, had married Miss Stevenson, the sister of one of his fellow students at the school, and to enable him to support her had recourse to colouring prints after Westall

and others, works at that time of ready sale; he also began to paint portraits. In the year 1800 we find him exhibiting at the Royal Academy for the first time, two of these portraits, one of his young wife, and one of Mrs. Meadows, doubtless the wife of his master. When little more than twenty-one years of age, he painted his first subject picture in water colours, a girl stooping over a river bank to gather a water lily; and having completed his time with Meadows, he obtained admisssion as a student of the Royal Academy. There also, he continued to exhibit—principally portraits—ending in 1804 with one subject picture, "The Portland Fish Girl." He did not join the Water-Colour Society on its foundation, although we learn that he was already a somewhat popular favourite; but in 1807 he was admitted as an "associate exhibitor," and contributed three subject pictures.

Pyne tells us that when Heaphy's picture of "Juvenile Poachers Disputing for their Stolen Game" was exhibited, the then President of the Academy, West, pointed it out before a room full of persons of rank and position as a work of great merit and original talent. This criticism of course spread from one to another and greatly increased the young painter's reputation. His "Fish Market," exhibited in the Water-Colour Exhibition of 1809, raised him to the summit of success; it was painted with great care, full of truth and character, the colour tender and delicate, the hues of the fish rendered with great purity. His pictures found ready sale at prices high for our own day; but remarkable for his time, if, as has been said, his "Hastings' Fish Market" was sold for the sum of 500 guineas. But Heaphy

was versatile and somewhat volatile. In 1807 he was appointed portrait painter to the Princess of Wales whom he painted in miniature, as he did many other persons of rank and fashion. His subject pictures having less of his attention, the sale of them about this time began to decline, and many remained on his hands. Soon afterwards he left the Water-Colour Society; exhibiting there for the last time in 1811.

He now gave himself up to portraiture, and with this view he quitted England for the British Camp in the Peninsula, where he occupied himself in painting portraits of the principal officers. Here he must have led a life of adventure, since he continued with the army throughout the rest of the campaign and until the war ended with the Battle of Toulouse. On his return to England he painted a large picture of the Duke of Wellington, and the officers of his staff, some of whom had fallen victims to the strife, and their memories are thus preserved to us. The work was engraved, and had much success.

Although Heaphy owed some portion of his art-education to the Royal Academy and was on friendly terms with individual members, the whole of his artistic life was, we are told, "characterized by active hostility to that body:" this was the source of most of his friendships, and of his personal relations with other artists; and this feeling led him to endeavour to form a rival society. For some time after the completion of his portrait picture, he had practised art only at intervals and in a desultory manner; much of his time being occupied with a building speculation into which he had entered in the neighbourhood of St. John's Wood. But when his

thoughts again reverted to art, he was aware that his long absence from England had entirely severed him from the Water-Colour Society, and he began to agitate the foundation of the Society of British Artists. He worked energetically to bring together, and to unite into a body, those artists who favoured the movement. He sat continually on their Committees, and when at length the society was fully formed, he was nominated their first President. To the first exhibition in 1824 he contributed nine pictures, two of which were works in oil, and his life-long wishes seemed now realized.

But dissensions arose, as they are always likely to arise in newly-formed societies; the Academy in the beginning of its career had had its troubles, the Water-Colour Society its dissolutions and re-constructions, and the Society of British Artists had to undergo its share before finally settling into a well-recognized position in art. For some cause into which it is needless to inquire, Heaphy ceased to be President after the first year; after the second he ceased to be an exhibitor, and his connection with the society terminated. Years passed away during which Heaphy contributed little to art; but he was still interested in all new associations of artists. He was again active in the formation of the new Society of Painters in Water Colours, of which he became a member; but died shortly after its foundation on the 19th November, 1835, aged about fifty-five years.

Heaphy's works won upon the public by their truthfulness and direct reference to Nature. His brother painters had attempted fashion, false rusticity, and classicality; he went to-Nature both for his character and expression, and did not scruple to represent her as

he found her. Of this his best picture in the South Kensington Museum (No. 604), "The Wounded Leg," is an example. It is not an agreeable subject to choose, but Heaphy made no compromise in representing it; the wounded leg forms a prominent feature. The labourer smarting under the removal of the plaister, the somewhat stolid gaze of the labourer's wife, and the patient carefulness of the old mother taking off the dressing, are excellent for their character and for truth of expression; they do not recall the painter's model, and are widely removed from the conventional features, the head drawn by recipe, of Westall and his school. The picture is much faded, but still shows that the execution was free, and less laboured than that he afterwards adopted in his miniatures and portraits.

Practising his art in the cottage, the field, or by the sea-beach rather than in the studio, it is little to be wondered that he habitually undervalued what he termed academic art; using the phrase in reference to the mode of study adopted by the old masters, whose works he probably persuaded himself he held in less estimation than was actually the fact; for on visiting Italy towards the close of his life he evidenced his true appreciation of their power by the earnestness with which he made copies from their works. Heaphy's life illustrates the necessity of unceasing practice on the part of him who would continue to improve. We have said that his picture of "Wellington and his Staff" completed, Heaphy, for several years, painted only occasionally and at long intervals. When he again desired to assume the active practise of his profession, although still in the prime of life, he felt that he had fallen off

rather than improved, and exclaimed with grief, "My art has gone from me."

David Cox, an eminent water-colour painter, was born in Birmingham on the 29th April, 1783. His father was a blacksmith, a healthy handicraft which has been the specialty of the town and neighbourhood from time immemorial; the whole population being more or less workers in metal. The mother of the painter, a woman of strong good sense and deep religious feeling, gave their only son David such an orderly and careful training in his childhood, as served to guide him aright in the difficulties and dangers to which he was exposed on his entry into life, and to form the sincere character of the man. While yet a child the boy had the misfortune to break his leg; this, joined to a somewhat delicate constitution, obviously unfitted him to follow his father's trade. While laid up from the effects of the accident, a box of colours and some paper provided for his amusement, was a source of such unceasing delight to the invalid, that his father, on his recovery, sent him to a drawing school in the town, conducted by Mr. Barber, Sen., a local teacher of the day. Here he must have made great progress, and showed a true vocation for art; since, when not yet sixteen years of age, he was apprenticed to a locket-painter, to paint the devices and ornaments of various kinds, which mounted in metal form what is called toy jewelry, for which Birmingham is almost as much noted as for its coarser works in iron. He lost his master at the end of about eighteen months, and was obliged to seek other sources of improvement and employment: a locket of his painting still in the possession of his family, shows that he had

obtained great mastery of his work, even during the short time he had been engaged in it.

Not readily finding other employment in art, to which he instinctively clung, he undertook, like his great predecessor Claude, to grind colours; and in this way he laboured for the scene painters at the Birmingham Theatre; gaining at the same time, from his habits of observation, a knowledge of their art and art processes. Macready, the father of the tragedian, was then stage manager, and wishing to improve the scenery of his theatre, he sent to London and engaged De Maria, who at that time was painting scenes for the Italian Opera, to come and prepare a set for him. Of this artist we have no records, but his works seem to have awakened in Cox the desire to become a landscape painter. He used to compare the ready handling and broad manner of his scenes to Wilson's landscapes. De Maria, who soon perceived young Cox's talent for the art, set him to carry on the less important parts of his own works, and to paint side scenes. Shortly after, Macready, who accidentally found out the skill and readiness of the young assistant, employed him to copy, on his own account, a set of scenes for the Sheffield Theatre. Of scenic art, more than any other art, the essential object is to please the eye—to make effective points tell, and to express the intended effect with facility and ease. It may be presumed that young Cox, during the four years he remained with the company as scene painter, laid the foundation of those very qualities, which are so characteristic of his works, and which, added to his refined sense of the colouring of landscape, of the effects of air, and the fresh atmosphere of English

scenery, make his pictures such favourites with all who love art.

The management, as is customary with most provincial companies, moved from place to place, and the scene painters travelled also. This unsettled life was very distasteful to Cox. After remaining the time we have named, he left and proceeded to London; where, in the first instance, he sought and obtained employment in the scene-loft at Astley's Theatre. In his journeys to and from his labours there, he was attracted by the water-colour drawings in Palser's well-known shop, then on the Surrey side of the river; the works there exhibited determined Cox to become a water-colour painter. He was fortunate enough at some of his subsequent visits to Palser's to make the acquaintance of John Varley, who invited him to his painting room, and introduced him, no doubt, to the clever knot of rising artists who assembled in his studio, and who profited so largely by the maxims and methods inculcated there. Colonel Windsor, afterwards Earl of Plymouth, struck with some of Cox's works, which he saw at Palser's, obtained many pupils for our artist; who was thus enabled to leave the theatre, and take more entirely to the art he loved.

In 1805, Cox made his first visit to North Wales, and on his return exhibited first in Bond Street, and on the breaking up of that society, with the one in Spring Gardens. Residing on Dulwich Common, then somewhat of a sequestered nook, though in the immediate vicinity of London, Cox made a diligent study of Nature; not by elaborate imitation, but, as he said, always with some direct purpose—to learn to render the aspects of some one of the several periods of the day, with its

varied effects and the incidents and characteristics suitable to it. He also studied the old masters—Velasquez and Ruysdael being his chief favourites. He copied Gaspar Poussin for his improvement; nor were the works of Girtin, Turner, Havell, and Varley without their direct influence upon him: thus searching the art of the past and the practice of his contemporaries, to give himself a foundation on which to form his own style direct from the observation of Nature.

These studies were for a time suspended by his being appointed, in 1814, teacher of drawing to the senior officers of the Military College near Farnham; but finding the duties irksome and unsuited to his disposition, he resigned after a few months, and retired, in 1815, to Hereford; visiting London usually in the spring, at the exhibition season, to keep up his acquaintance with art and artists, and to prevent that falling off which is too apt to arise when an artist secludes himself from his brethren. At Hereford he continued to reside until 1829, when he returned to the vicinity of London, and lived at Kensington until 1840. Then, weary of teaching and making small drawings, and wishing to practise art for itself and to indulge in his own feeling for it, he retired to Harborne, a village in the neighbourhood of his native city, and devoted himself almost entirely to painting in oil. His works in this material are rarely seen in London, remaining principally in the hands of his friends; but he continued to contribute to the Water-Colour Society's Exhibition in Pall Mall until his death, on the 7th of June, 1859.

In 1816, Cox published a *Treatise on Landscape Painting in Water Colours*, containing progressive les-

sons, with examples of the various effects of morning and evening, of storm and calm, of winter and summer. He gives us his own views of the aim of the landscape painter. "In the selection of a subject from Nature," he says, "the student should keep in view the principal object which induced him to make the sketch. The prominence of the leading feature should be clearly supported throughout; the character of the picture should be derived from it; every object introduced should be subservient to it." Elsewhere he says, "The principle of landscape painting is, that it should convey to the mind the fullest impression that can be produced from the various classes of scenery; such, indeed, as shall excite in the spectator an interest beyond any other effect that might be chosen. This," he adds, "can only be obtained by the most judicious selection of tints, and the skilful arrangement and application of them to differences in time, in seasons, and situations." The beauty of the "Liber Studiorum" incited Cox to attempt a rivalry. One hundred fine drawings in sepia, lately belonging to Mr. Quilter, of Norwood, were prepared for publication: highly excellent they are, yet markedly different from those of Turner, showing how separate were the conceptions of these two artists, working with a like aim. They are a lesson to the new school of painters, of the study both these great artists made of arrangement, effect, and the agreeable disposition of parts. The intended publication of those by Cox was not, however, proceeded with.

Cox's *handling* in water colours was peculiar to himself, and was somewhat analogous to that adopted by Gainsborough and Constable in oil-painting. He worked

with wet colour, repeating broken tints loosely hatched over one another until the local colour was obtained. From the fluency of his brush, and the liquidity of his tints, they dry with richness and fulness, the gum rising to the surface. Many of his best works are wrought in this manner, the knife being sparingly used to give glitter and sparkle. We have already said that a painter's peculiar execution is part of his idiosyncrasy; that it has less to do with his education than with his feeling. It is the readiest way by which he can express to others what he feels in art, or sees in Nature—it is personal, and could hardly with advantage to his art expression be changed for any other mode of execution. This being the case, we cannot agree with a distinguished critic, who says:—"The execution of Cox is merely a condition of northern palsy, through which, in a blundering way, a true sense of certain modes of colour, and of the sweetness of certain natural scenes, finds innocent expression." We think that Cox adopted his peculiar execution advisedly; and from judging it the best suited to give his impression of Nature.

It has been objected to great completion in art, that it leaves nothing to the imagination of the spectator. This is certainly not the case with the works of Cox. Like the two great painters we have quoted, he seems more intent upon obtaining the exact tone and colour of Nature, than in defining *form;* which is gradually developed in his pictures by the juxtaposition of hues and tints rather than by drawing. Apparently simple transcripts of Nature, his works are yet cunningly dominated by art. The light and shade are well distributed, the figures in the very rightest place, the keeping always

excellent. His great characteristics are a generalized treatment of Nature rather than individualized imitation; breadth, luminous freshness and breezy motion. He had a true genius for landscape art, a thorough perception of the colouring of Nature; but, unlike Turner, who mastered the whole realm of landscape, Cox was contented with a more limited range, in which, however, he reigned almost without a rival. No painter has given us more truly the moist brilliancy of early summer time, ere the sun has dried the spring bloom from the lately opened leaf. The sparkle and shimmer of foliage and weedage, in the fitful breeze that rolls away the clouds from the watery sun, when the shower and the sunshine chase each other over the land, have never been given with greater truth than by David Cox.

Many of his works are truly imaginative; the very looseness of the handling already adverted to adding to their sentiment. His noble picture of "A Welsh Funeral," the property of Mr. F. Craven, is characteristic both of his modes of execution, and of that highly imaginative feeling, which he added to truth, of the general impression of Nature. It is one of his largest and most impressive works. The time chosen is twilight —day, just dying out into the gloom of evening—an hour so full of mournful impressions, so suitable and so in harmony with the subject. The picture is nevertheless full of colour and freshness, and not by any means heavy or grey. The funeral procession moves away into the picture, along a road bordered with stone dykes, and overhung with trees; these contrast with the barren stony hills in the near background, the desolate stony region onwards to which they are bearing the corpse. The backs of the

throng of mourners are all turned to the spectator; going away, as it were, from life into the gloomy solitude of death: to the grave in the little hill-side churchyard, a sepulchre in the rocks seen beyond. A gleam of light illuminating the belfry shows the bell on the swing; we seem to hear its mournful knell, while over the path of the funeral, above the chapel and the desolate hills, a rift in the dark clouds opens up to us a glimpse as it were of the calm heavens, the glorious home and future rest of the departed.

Latterly Cox used at times a low-toned paper, coarse in manufacture, with fragments of straw appearing on the surface, and he freely resorted to wiping out the lights, and even to the use of body colour; glazing over it, to give richness, but reserving points of pure light, to focus and give requisite tone to the whole. The "Funeral" is painted in this manner: the execution is loose and apparently undecided; when seen near, it is a mass of blots and scratches, but from a few feet distance we feel that any further completion would take from the perfect impression it makes on us, and deprive the picture of the solemn truth of dim imaginative twilight which hangs over the whole. The scene is from the neighbourhood of Bettws y Coed, which was latterly as much Cox's country as Dedham and Flatford were Constable's. There he painted many of his finest works; and it shows how readily genius finds a subject, where others only find tameness and commonplace, that many of his pictures are from a single field. As a painter, he had a marked individuality, and his pictures are an honour to the Water-Colour School.

Samuel Prout adds another name to the long list of

Devonshire artists. He was born at Plymouth on the 17th September, 1783. When barely five years old the child, rambling in the copses and beside the ample hedgerows of the neighbourhood in search of nuts and wild fruits, was smitten with a sun-stroke, carried home insensible, and not only suffered much at the time, but in all his after life was subject to constantly recurring attacks of headache, so severe as to confine him to his bed and wholly to prevent any labour while they lasted. He early showed a great fondness for drawing, but as he advanced in years his father proposed that he should follow him in his own profession; though we are not informed what that was. The lad, however, had heard of the fame of his townsmen and their success in the great metropolis: the love of art had taken possession of him. His kind-hearted schoolmaster, too, had somewhat encouraged the pupil's propensities; he used to set young Prout beside him to make pen and ink sketches of the pedagogue's favourite cat, and thus that predilection for drawing, which the parent had thought a mere devotion to an idle amusement, was silently fostered and gradually became the fixed wish and decided aim of the future artist.

The Rev. Dr. Bidlake was then master of the grammar school. Placed under his instruction Prout became the schoolfellow and companion of his townsman, Haydon, whose hopes and aims were of a like character; and on their half-holidays the two lads used to wander forth together on the shores of the Sound, in the grounds of Mount Edgecumbe, among the deep shady lanes, or beside the rocky Devonshire streams, to sketch and to enjoy Nature. No doubt their early efforts were very

different; Prout's careful and imitative, Haydon's bold, hasty, and sketchy; but they were at least united in their love of art. It will be remembered that Payne, holding some office in the dock-yard, was a resident of Plymouth and enjoyed a local reputation for his water-colour drawings of scenery in the vicinity; his works seem to have stimulated the exertions of Prout in the same art, and he was allowed to have a few lessons from S. Williams, a local teacher. Hence he had obtained some skill when, in the winter of 1801, Mr. Britton, journeying westward in search of materials for his forthcoming work, *Picturesque Beauties of England*, was introduced by Dr. Bidlake, to young Prout. Britton says, "He showed me sketches of rock scenery, and certain humble stone cottages which had no feature of architecture, masonry, or carpentry, and were as shapeless as if put together by uncultivated men. They consisted only of unworked stones piled up to form something like four walls, with two or three holes for doors and windows, and were covered with straw, thin stones, and heath clods." Picturesque objects, no doubt, and proving thus early the picturesque tendency of Prout's art, a quality which never left him; but having little relation to the precision and accuracy so necessary to an antiquarian draughtsman. Britton, however, saw, or thought he saw, promise in the lad, and offered to take him on his journey into Cornwall, and to pay all expenses in return for his assistance in sketching objects of interest for the forthcoming work. The offer met with a willing assent on the part of the elder Prout; but the journey was very unpropitious: it began with wet and stormy weather, the accommodation at the little country inns on the route was

the reverse of comfortable, while Britton tells us that he soon found the youth was unable to render him the assistance he expected and was depressed at his own deficiencies and want of success. When they reached Truro they parted for the present, Prout to return to Plymouth, Britton to continue his journey to the Land's End.

Their connection, however, was not to end here. Prout had found his deficiency in drawing, his ignorance of construction, and his want of knowledge of perspective; he saw that he was quite unable to make correct transcripts of ruins or buildings for such a work as that of Britton's, and he set himself diligently to conquer his deficiencies. He studied and sketched all such objects within his reach, and in 1802, was able to send up a folio for Britton's inspection—sketches of Launceston, Tavistock, Okehampton Castle, &c., some of which were found of sufficient excellence to permit of their being engraved for Britton's work. This led to a renewal of intercourse between them, and resulted in an invitation to the young painter, who came to London, and lodged with Britton for nearly two years in Wilderness Row, Clerkenwell; employed, greatly to his improvement, in copying the best sketches and drawings of Hearne, Alexander, Turner, Cotman, Mackenzie and others. In 1803-4, Prout was sent by Britton to make sketches in Cambridge, Essex and Wilts, but in 1805, was obliged to return home, chiefly on account of his health, which unfitted him from continuing a close application to his studies.

In 1804, we first trace Prout as an exhibitor in the Royal Academy, (No. 662), "St. Keyne's Well, Cornwall," and again in 1805, when he contributed subjects

in Devonshire, Somersetshire and Wiltshire; and here he continued to exhibit until his election into the Water-Colour Society in 1815. Much of Prout's time—as, indeed, was the case with many of his brother water-colour painters—was devoted to teaching; this led him to publish on his own account many educational works. *Studies for Learners* was published by Ackerman in 1816, and followed in 1818 by a set of *Progressive Fragments*, by *Rudiments of Landscape, Views in the North and West of England*, &c. The early works executed by soft ground etching in a simple and large manner.

Born in a country richly wooded, and with an abundant weedage, Prout seems to have been naturally deficient in the power of representing foliage, and he rarely introduced trees into his pictures. His style was simple and large, without imitative details; the picturesque effect of the whole being sought somewhat at the expense of the individual parts. Having passed his early years in the neighbourhood of our great naval arsenal; conversant from his childhood with the beach and cliffs of Devon, and the boats and craft that people its shores, it would have seemed, that with the above-named deficiency, he would have become a marine painter; and this probably would have been the case but for his early introduction, through Britton, to employment on subjects connected with architecture. Many of his early pictures are marine subjects, and those who recollect his fine painting of "The Indiaman Ashore," exhibited in the Society's rooms in 1819, will feel Prout's great qualification for such works. This picture probably arose from the impression made on him by the wreck of the *Dalton*, East Indiaman, on the rocks under

the citadel of his native town. The crew were saved by the great personal exertions of Sir E. Pellew, afterwards Lord Exmouth, and the hull held together on the sands for hours after the wreck. Prout and Haydon are said to have watched it as it rolled in the surf and spray, and gradually broke up. Both at the time attempted pictures of the subject, and both failed; but the scene seems to have made a great impression upon Prout, and served to incite him to the fine work he afterwards produced.

But the circumstances we have named turned Prout from marine subjects to architecture, and it is as the painter of churches and cathedrals, of picturesque Norman cities and market places, that Prout is most celebrated. Yet we cannot feel that Prout had any particular qualification for such labours beyond his great sense of the picturesque. It is true that he seldom misses the general proportions of his buildings, or the relation of the several parts to the whole, yet that want of knowledge of construction which Britton complained of, he never overcame; and he hid his lack of perception of beauty and refinement of detail, under the broad markings of the reed pen. In all that related to the "making up" of his picture, Prout was unrivalled in his own art, and may be compared to Roberts as an oil painter; whose art his own in many respects resembled. Like Roberts, Prout was skilled in the appropriate introduction of figures, and peopled his pictures with a host of living accessories, for which Normandy and Venice amply supplied him with picturesque materials. The crowded market-places of Normandy are usually under the shadow of the cathedral; there are gathered in masses, fruit and vegetables, shaded by huge coloured

umbrellas; the market people in quaint costumes, rich with many dyes: the outskirts crowded with cumbrous vehicles drawn by horses under a panoply of harness studded with brazen nails and jangling bells, gay with tassels and fringes; the colour of the groups below carried upwards into balcony and window by flowers and draperies, by gaily painted signs and lattices. Such material, in Prout's hands, produced pictures that make us overlook their paucity of details, and the sacrifice of individual realization at the shrine of the picturesque.

Prout's election as a member of the Water-Colour Society in 1815 brought him fully before the patrons of that art, and when in 1818, in search of health, he visited the Continent and began to paint the picturesque towns of Normandy, so well suited as subjects for his pencil, he had made a manner of his own and taken an acknowledged rank in his art. In 1824 he visited Venice, a city filled with subjects for his brush, and extended his journies gradually to other Italian cities, to Germany, Bohemia, &c. The invention of lithography about this time introduced an art admirably fitted for the dissemination of Prout's works, and by its means he was enabled to publish *Fac-similes of Sketches made in Flanders and Germany, Views in France, Switzerland, and Italy;* with others of the like nature.

During the latter years of his life he was a frequent sufferer from ill-health; he died at his residence in Camberwell, 10 February, 1852, aged sixty-eight. We have already said that Prout, as an architectural draughtsman, aimed at generalization rather than that precise imitation which characterized the well-trained pupils who were formed by the elder Pugin. Yet he brought before

us admirably, if with a degree of *chique*, the general aspect of the ruined buildings, the churches and towns he so loved to paint; his art was that of the period, and had little relation to the precision required by the new school. His reputation in his own day was greatly extended by his numerous publications; but there is no doubt that the brilliancy of his colouring, the apparent care and freedom of his execution, and the largeness of his style, will always make his pictures sought for, and retain for them a place in the folios of collectors.

The De Wints, as their name imports, are of Dutch origin, and the family had long been wealthy merchants in Amsterdam. Somewhat more than a century ago, while the population of New York still consisted largely of the descendants of Dutch settlers, one of the De Wints left the sleepy canals and slow counting-houses of Holland, to try his fortune among the more active settlers of the new country, and in the young city of New York, Henry De Wint, the father of the painter, was born. He was the second son of a merchant of ample fortune, and in due time was sent to Europe to study physic in the university of Leyden; there he took a doctor's degree and went to London to complete his medical education. His father had determined, that on his return to New York he should marry his cousin, that the family wealth might continue with the name; but this was not to be; young De Wint fell in love with an English lady of good family but no fortune, and married her at the early age of twenty-one. The father, offended with the step, withdrew the allowance of 300*l.* a year which he had hitherto paid his son, and never again saw the young physician. He received an injury shortly

afterwards from the overturning of his carriage, and died, leaving all his wealth to the eldest son. No doubt the struggle of the young couple was for a time severe; youth is no recommendation for a physician, nor was the matter improved by his being a foreigner. He fixed his residence in Staffordshire, where he gradually established himself in practice, and where he continued to reside until his death in May, 1807. *Peter De Wint* the painter was the fourth son of the physician, and was born on the 21st of January, 1784. He was at first intended for his father's profession, but showing a great dislike to it as he grew up, and at the same time a great love for drawing, his father consented to his being an artist, and placed him, in 1802, with John Raphael Smith, the crayon painter and engraver. Here he met with a fellow pupil in William Hilton, the future historical painter, and a friendship was formed by the two lads that ended only with their lives. About the year 1807 the two young men entered as students of the Royal Academy during the keepership of Fuseli; the one to follow history painting to his life-long cost, and the disappointment of his best hopes; the other to practise landscape and to achieve competence and reputation from the new art of water-colour painting. In the year 1810 we find De Wint for the first time making his public appearance as an exhibitor. He sent three works to the Royal Academy, two being views in Staffordshire, and one in the neighbouring county of Derbyshire.

The intimacy of the two students soon ripened into a closer connection. De Wint visited the home of his friend. He found in Lincoln and its neighbourhood numberless subjects for his pencil: some of his best

pictures are of the noble cathedral, towering high above the town which nestles at its foot. Better still, he found in the only sister of his companion—the daughter of the clergyman—a congenial nature, suited to the serious earnestness of his character; and in 1810, Miss Hilton became the wife of De Wint. The union was a happy one for all parties, but especially for Hilton. Years were to elapse ere history painting would afford an establishment for him; meanwhile, in his sister's house he found a happy home. He only left it when his election to the keepership of the Royal Academy obliged residence; and after his late marriage and the loss of his wife, he returned to die at his sister's in Gower Street.

In 1810, De Wint became an exhibitor with the Society of Water-Colour Painters, and eventually a member of the body; and, though from time to time he sent a picture to the Royal Academy, he contributed for nearly forty years to the annual exhibitions of the Society. It is not to be supposed that De Wint's course was without its trials and difficulties. His father's death had occurred while the painter was yet a student. Marrying young, and at a time when art-purchasers were not so numerous as at present, he had to take to teaching—the usual resource of his brethren. This gradually introduced him to a wider circle: his pleasant manners and kindly nature made attached friends of those who had at first been pupils. He loved his art, particularly that branch of it he had made his own. He loved to paint direct from Nature, making sketches and studies for his more elaborate pictures: he was never so happy as when in the fields. Often tempted to extend his studies to the Continent, the scenery of his native country was

so congenial to his taste, and his love of home so strong, that, except a short visit to Normandy, he never left England. And after a happy life with those he loved, he died of disease of the heart, on the 30th June, 1849; leaving a widow, to whom we are indebted for many of the above facts, and an only daughter. He was buried near his friend and brother-in-law, in the ground of the Royal Chapel in the Savoy; and his widow has lately erected a handsome altar-tomb in Lincoln Cathedral, to the memory of the two friends who loved each other in life, and in death were not divided.

As an artist, De Wint formed a style of his own, sufficiently marked and distinct from his contemporaries to prove his originality. His art was neither realistic nor ideal; but he had a fine sense of colour, and truly appreciated the tints and harmonies of natural scenery. He was a very indifferent draughtsman, and had little executive handling. Thus, in his trees, the delicate forms against the sky, the intricate mystery of boughs, the multitudinous leafage are all merged into masses, yet so locally true that we hardly regret the omission of details. The figures also which he introduces into his landscapes, though well placed, and effective as to light and shade, and as enhancing points of colour leading the eye into the picture, are clumsy and feeble in their forms. He frequently used a drawing paper with a coarse surface; partly to give texture to his flat masses, partly to hide his deficient handling, as well as for its value in giving the appearance of finish with little labour. From his habit of laying in his effect at once in broad, flat washes, his works have great freshness and purity. He avoided those executive processes to which others

resorted. He occasionally *took out* his high lights, but did not make liberal use of the process; when he did, the forms are still large and clumsy, and do not improve the *handling*, but merely tell on the general effect of the work. He rarely flattened his tints by stippling, though he occasionally resorted to broad hatchings in his skies. Like most of the artists of his period, he objected to the use of white or of body colours in his works; though in some few instances we find his figures a little forced into sharpness by touches of solid white, as on the cattle of his picture of "Nottingham" (No. 516, South Kensington Museum). This picture, with (No. 517) "Walton on Thames," are good specimens of ready freedom of handling, with a certain sketch-like facility and ease; while "The Cricketers," (No. 515,) represents him in his more elaborate and finished compositions. In these, seeking for completion and richness, he loses somewhat of the freshness and ease of his less laboured works. He belonged to the middle period of water-colour art; to a school whose representatives have almost departed from amongst us.

George Fennel Robson was the son of a wine-merchant of Durham, in which city he was born in 1788. In early childhood he showed a power of imitation that seemed in the eyes of his friends to indicate the future artist. When only four or five years of age, he made careful outlines from Bewick's woodcuts, and, as he grew in years, was fond of loitering in the company of any artists who were attracted by the picturesque scenery of Durham; while in school hours he was apt to devote himself to miscellaneous sketching rather than to his tasks. His father seeing the bent of the boy's inclina-

tions, placed him for instruction in drawing with a local teacher of the name of Harle, with whom his progress was so rapid that the teacher soon found himself distanced by the pupil. In the spring of 1805, the year of the first Water-Colour Exhibition, young Robson came to London, with five pounds in his pocket, lent by his father to enable the lad to see the art and artists of the metropolis. Robson was so delighted with the works of Varley, Hills, Havell, Glover, and other of the exhibiting members of the society, that to rival them became his highest aim, and he decided to practise as a water-colour painter. He remained in London, and was so successful in the sale of his drawings, that he was enabled to maintain himself, and at the end of twelve months to return the five pounds to his father.

It may truly be said that Robson was a citizen of no mean city. The fine old Norman cathedral towering up on a well-wooded eminence, at the foot of which runs the river, widened out into a broad sheet by dams and weirs, and serving as a mirror for wooded banks, for towers and spires, with an expanse of sky against which the cathedral stands in bold relief—such a scene might well inspire a painter. Young Robson came to London with a portfolio of sketches of his native place, as a part of his stock-in-trade. In 1808 he published a view of Durham, which was so successful as to afford him the means of making a journey in the Highlands of Scotland, the Grampians and the fine scenery of the Lake district; laying up stores for future pictures, and studying nature under all the varied aspects of mountainous districts. The climate of England is peculiarly suited to the landscape-painter; the moisture of its

atmosphere induces those hazy mists that give breadth and size to our mountains, diminutive as they are when compared with those on the Continent. In the clear atmosphere of Italy and the East, hills, a day's journey in advance, seem to the traveller as if close at hand, and the distant town, the monastery, or the ruin, have their sharp, clear lines defined to his eye; but in our cloud-land, vapour, even in the day-time, interposes its blue veil between him and the distance; and as the sun declines, the hills, not hidden as are Alp and Apennine by rounded spurs, the outworks of their range, but starting almost at once from valley and plain, are shrouded with a dim mystery of purple haze that elevates them, and gives them the apparent magnitude of the mountains of other lands. This effect of the atmosphere of our climate Robson diligently studied, and it became one of the distinguishing features of his art.

On his return from Scotland, he published a set of outlines of the Grampian Hills. He seems to have studied thoroughly and lovingly the scenery of lake and mountain, and those grand effects which are peculiar to mountain districts, and annually made excursions into the north to renew his acquaintance with such scenes. In 1814, Robson was elected a member of the Water-Colour Society; and his works being much admired, they began to be eagerly sought for by patrons and collectors: in 1820 he was for one year president of the Society. After his election he was ever an active member, and in the years 1828, 1829, 1830, and 1831, contributed nearly two hundred works to the exhibition. In 1826, Britton published *Picturesque Views of English Cities*, from water-colour paintings by Robson. Britton gave

the painter 256 guineas for thirty-two finished paintings, or at the rate of eight guineas each: as several of the pictures had to be reduced to the size of the engravings, (9 in. by 6 in.,) we may be satisfied that none were less than this, and as the price was thought satisfactory at that time, it enables us to compare prices forty years ago, with what is the present value of such works. Later than this, it became the fashion for ladies to have a scrap-book or album on the table of the boudoir. The Countess Demidoff while in Paris determined to have a superb work of this kind, and gave commissions to the principal French artists for sketches and studies. Mrs. Haldimand, the wife of the London banker, followed in the same path; Robson was intrusted by her with the selection of contributors, and the sum of ten guineas named as the limit for each painter's work. This was thought liberal, and it served to increase the general popularity of the art; many charming works being executed for the album and subsequently exhibited. Years afterwards, when these books were broken up and the works dispersed, many of the sketches doubled and trebled their original value.

The Rev. Hare Townshend, of Norfolk Street, Park Lane, possesses a fine specimen of Robson's later manner; it is a Scotch tarn, high up in the bosom of the mountains, the time chosen being just when the sun, not yet set, has sunk behind the jagged crest of hills that wall around the dark tarn. The hills are of a purple gloom, and the only lights are the tints from the hidden sun on the stormy clouds, and the reflection of the same in the margent waters of the pool. A few goats, and two or three figures of a chieftain and his

followers, are on the rugged boulders in the foreground, and the whole has a grandeur and solemnity that make it a fit companion for Danby's "Upas Tree," hanging opposite to it in the same room.

Robson at times worked in conjunction with Hills, the animal painter, painting the backgrounds and scenery to Hills' animals. In the autumn of the year 1833, the two made a journey to Jersey, and after a short stay in that island, Robson took passage on board a Scotch smack for the north. He was landed in a distressing state of sickness at Stockton-on-Tees, and notwithstanding every care and attention, after a week's illness he died on the 8th of September, 1833. A post-mortem examination failed to reveal the cause of his death: he himself in his last agonies declared that he was poisoned; and it was thought that his decease was to be attributed to his having, while on ship-board, eaten of food cooked in unclean copper vessels.

Periodicals that devote some part of their space to art and artists, are now so numerous, that few painters of any eminence pass from amongst us without some particulars relating to them, some notice given us of our loss. But in searching these notices it is curious to find how largely they consist of opinions as to the merit of the artists and the character of his art, how few are the facts as to his life and career which they contain. Such is even the case with William Hunt, so lately lost to us. During his lifetime his birthplace was often differently stated as at Hastings and in London. In like manner, during Turner's lifetime, it was asserted by one who had made a short trip in his company, and as on Turner's own authority, that he was a Devonshire man, born at Barn-

staple. The world now knows that he was a Londoner, his birthplace in Maiden Lane, Covent Garden; and in the same neighbourhood it is equally well ascertained that *William Hunt* first saw the light. He was born at No. 8, Old Belton Street, Long Acre, on the 28th of March, 1790, the son of John and Judith Hunt, and was christened shortly afterwards in the church of St. Giles' in the Fields. His father carried on the business of a tin-plate worker, and those who are curious in searching for the birthplaces of men of note, will still find the old house standing, and the old business still in the hands of one of the same name and the same lineage; the altered street now bearing the name of Endell Street, but the number of the house remaining as it was at Hunt's birth. Not that the neighbourhood is the same as when young Hunt passed his sickly childhood there.

In that day, passing from Charing Cross to High Street, St. Giles's, the passenger would have threaded a labyrinth of narrow courts and alleys, now largely removed to make way for wider thoroughfares, but then inhabited, back and front, from cellar to garret; the haunt of low traders, the mart for second-hand clothes and musty commodities; the air poisoned at the very portal of the district by the crowded churchyard of St. Martin's, with its reeking soil raised by continual burials many feet above the level of the pavement. What wonder young Hunt was sickly! How could he be otherwise? his childhood passed in such a tainted atmosphere; far away from the fresh air of field or orchard, the breath of the apple-blossom and the may-flower, that in after life he loved so well and painted so truthfully: the neighbourhood even now is not of the pleasantest, and wretched-

ness and want, filth and destitution, are in its near vicinity; but the air and the sun have been let into the district in many places, and especially into the broad street wherein the old house still stands unchanged. We have no record of the artist's mother, of her influence on his childhood, or of the instruction which he received in his youth. Judging from his letters in after life, it must have been scanty; for though the matter of his correspondence is well expressed, it was said to be with difficulty, and after many corrections.

When the time arrived for settling the future vocation of the lad, his own inclination was decidedly towards art, while his father is said to have been strenuously opposed to it. Like most tradesmen, he was well acquainted with the steady profits of business, sure if slow, and could perhaps see little prospect for his son in the arts; luxuries required only by the few, and in the hard times to which men then looked anxiously forward, unlikely to be a very profitable source of income. When the delicacy of the sickly youth, the necessity of finding some light occupation for him, and the lad's own steadfast wishes overcame his objections, the father determined to follow the old practice, and to apprentice the boy to a master who should thoroughly teach him his calling. Whatever had been the boy's education in other respects, he had certainly made some progress in art thus early, and must have had some encouragement from his parents in his pursuit of it; since we learn that his early friend, Mr. Linnell, who was intimate and worked with him at the time, possesses paintings by him made in the year 1805, months previous to his beginning regularly to learn art as a profession.

When about sixteen years of age, young Hunt was bound apprentice for seven years to John Varley, then living at 15, Broad Street, Golden Square. In our account of water-colour painting, we have already noticed Varley's influence on the rising school. In Varley's house, Hunt met with many fellow-students, among others, with Mulready, who no doubt contributed to Hunt's future career by that example of careful and earnest study which has made his name so well known in art; and, most probably by his advice, Hunt sought and obtained admission as a student of the Royal Academy in the year 1808.

Hunt must have made rapid progress under John Varley's instruction, since in 1807, when little more than seventeen years of age, three of his pictures, which appear to have been works in oil, were hung in the Exhibition of the Royal Academy; and he continued to exhibit there during several following years. As a pupil of John Varley, and companion of the frequenters of that school, Hunt became a visitor at Dr. Munro's house in the Adelphi; followed, no doubt, the practice of the other painters who assembled there; and on the summer evenings, after their study at the Academy, in company with his friend Linnell, used to go forth to make those sketches whose production the Doctor encouraged, by his purchases of the young students; or to copy Gainsborough's drawings, it is said, for the sum of one shilling and sixpence each. Doctor Munro, who saw young Hunt's docility and talent, took him down to his house at Bushey, near Watford, to paint from Nature under the Doctor's own instruction; who, we are told, did not hesitate to sponge out large portions of these

sketches, when their execution or colouring did not meet with his approval. Hunt often stayed with him for a month at a time, and was paid at the rate of 7*s.* 6*d.* per diem for his labours for the folio of Munro.

While sketching in the neighbourhood of Watford, the young student became known to the Earl of Essex, and was invited by him to paint some of the scenery of the park at Cashiobury. In Britton's account of that mansion there are engraved two interiors from paintings by Hunt; and from the farm-servants, gamekeepers, and others many of his early figure subjects were sketched. While serving his time to John Varley, Hunt's address is given in the catalogues at the house of his master, but in the catalogue of 1811 we find that he had returned to the old home in Belton Street. His name first appears in connection with the Water-Colour Society in 1814. In this year the Society had been nearly broken up by a change in its objects—its exhibition being opened to works in oil as well as in water colours, and Hunt's contributions as "fellow exhibitor" were most likely pictures in oil. In 1824, when the Society had resumed its original character, Hunt was elected an associate, and in 1827 a full member of the body; and he continued to be a constant exhibitor with them to the last, one of his latest contributions being his own portrait.

A sickly child, he was throughout his life more or less of an invalid, and never married. For his health's sake he resided many years at Hastings, and by great care continued to live and paint until nearly his seventy-fifth birthday. Attending at the rooms of the Society, to examine the paintings of the candidates for its membership, he caught a violent cold, which terminated in

apoplexy, and caused his death on the 10th February, 1864.

The works of Hunt differ widely from those of his contemporaries: they have a character of their own, and many qualities which place him as an artist, in his somewhat narrow range, on a level with the highest. He painted landscapes, figures, and, latterly, fruit and flowers equally well. His great characteristics are perfect imitation, without littleness or mean details; truthful colouring, never overcharged, never meretricious; a remarkable power of rendering the effect of daylight on the surface of objects, giving each the greatest textural truth, and marking its distinctive qualities of absorption or reflection. His sense of daylight was equal to that of De Hooghe, with the greater truth that arises from more luminous materials. Though a close imitator of Nature, it was never without selection; and if he made no attempt to add those effects which give ideality or poetry to his subject, yet even his objects of still-life were raised almost to the dignity of fine art by the taste with which he rendered them.

As a figure painter, Hunt drew passably well and rendered rustic Nature with truth both of character and expression. If he is at times vulgar in his humour, and in the choice of his subjects, he at least avoids the vapid prettinesses from poets and novelists, of the Stephanoffs, or the sleek, mannered, china painted tableaux of Richter. There may be a smell of the barn or the stable, the aroma of the labourer's cottage about his boys and bumpkins; but they are the children of the soil, the rustics of real life and not of the stage or the studio. Such are "The Attack," a young lout sitting down to feast on a

huge pie; "The Defeat," the same youth overcome with food fast asleep, the almost emptied dish beside him; "The Combat," a glutton of the same order, parrying the attack of a wasp on his viands; "Cymon and Iphigenia," a rustic burlesque on the classic pair; the bumpkin lover stealing a furtive gaze at his sweetheart sleeping on straw in a barn; or "The Brown Study," a mulatto boy vainly endeavouring to master the mysteries of an addition sum, the hopelessness of the effort well shown on his weakly knitted brow. Better than these was "The Cricketers," now in the possession of Miss Sheepshanks, which, in the exhibition of 1855, was examined with much interest by the French artists.

In the pictures of Hunt we find every variety of execution; from tinted drawings, such as those of the early water-colour painters, to the thorough adoption of the pigments and processes of the present school. In one of his earliest works, "A Cottage Door," (No. 350, South Kensington collection), we find him retaining the tinted process, drawing in the whole with a reed pen in Prout's manner, and applying the local tints over the grey ground. Yet, in this early work, we clearly trace the dawning of those qualities which we have described as characteristic of his art. As he advanced, his landscapes exhibit more and more of these qualities; more and more of the luminous glitter of the atmosphere, the varied treatment of surface, of which we here trace the indications. In No. 341, South Kensington Museum, "A Boy with Goat," the colour is produced by tints coarsely hatched beside and over one another, the flesh finished by stippling, and the knife freely used throughout to give texture to the various surfaces. In some

parts advantage is taken of the roughness thus obtained to give texture by tinting over it. The hair of the goat is wholly made out by scratching up the paper with the knife. Very little body colour is used, and that merely to give absorbency to some of the surfaces; the work is well worth careful examination for the great effect obtained by the use of what would appear very incommensurate means. "The Monk," (No. 644) in the same collection, shows the same handling, with a larger use of body colour, as in the high lights of the flesh, the cover of the book, &c. Yet even here the grey hairs are almost wholly rendered with the knife. In "The Brown Study," (No. 526,) all the same methods are employed, but with greater refinement. It is curious to notice, in parts of this picture, how indifferent the painter was to the surface of his paper being kept intact; large portions in this picture have been destroyed by changes and the very roughness made to assist the required effect.

In his last manner Hunt entirely left the transparent system of the founders of the Society; his works of this period are wonders of colour and imitative execution, but they have not the excellence of his middle period. Take the "Plums" (No. 526 in the same collection) as an example. This drawing is treated almost wholly in body colours; the traditions of the old school have been disregarded, and Hunt has followed, if he did not lead, the way in the new. The man of true genius easily adapts himself to new processes: the tints are mixed with solid colour; the bloom on the fruit is body colour, the background is loaded into texture with body colour; indeed the picture is so purely a work in body colours

as to approach what in old times would be called tempera painting. Such is the modern practice as opposed to the self-denying transparency of the early water-colour school; such were Hunt's latter pictures, and to the end he worked on with little apparent decline in his powers, little feebleness of eye or hand. The old painter continued to labour and to love his labour till the last.

We are obliged to pass over the names of many men whose works are creditable to the school and would claim place for them in dictionaries or in memoirs of artists, but who have not contributed sufficiently to the progress of art to have place in this work. Such were François Louis Francia, Francis Stevens, James Holmes, John Byrne, and some others. *Copley Vandyke Fielding*, however, must be noticed here not only for his art, but also for his influence during many years as the President of the Water-Colour Society; and as the fashionable teacher of the day, whose pupils swelled the crowds who visited the exhibition and purchased the pictures from its walls. He was one of four sons of Theodore Nathan Fielding, an artist of considerable local reputation who resided near Halifax, painted in oil with the careful finish of Denner, and was much patronized by the gentry of Lancashire and Yorkshire. Copley, his second son, was born in the year 1787, and showing in due time a liking for art, he received an early education from his father; who seems to have been more careful than most parents in instructing his children, since Theodore, Copley, Thales, and Newton, his four sons, were all either artists by profession or practised art with success.

We are not informed at what period Copley left home,

but early in the century he was placed with John Varley, the master of so many pupils afterwards famous; though whether apprenticed or not we are uncertain. Fielding, with his master and fellow-pupils, was a constant visitor at Dr. Munro's, and there formed those friendships which connected his future with water-colour art. Not that he neglected entirely the nobler medium of oil; but his reputation wholly rests on his water-colour painting. Intending to follow landscape art, he refrained from the labour necessary to obtain admission as a student in the Royal Academy; hence the figures he introduces in his pictures do not reach beyond the usual properties of the landscape painter. In 1806 Fielding married the sister of Mrs. Varley, by whom he had two daughters, one of whom survives. In 1810 we find his name for the first time as an associated exhibitor of the Water-Colour Society, contributing five landscapes, and he continued to exhibit through all the changes of the society until his death. In 1818 he was treasurer, and in 1819 secretary of the society; and during this period, when the society was in some difficulty, he seems to have made great efforts to support the exhibition, sending in 1819, forty-six frames containing seventy-one paintings, and in 1820, forty-three frames, with fifty-six paintings. Most of these must have been such as he executed in lessons before his pupils, works of slight merit which had perhaps better not have been exhibited. In 1831, on the resignation of Cristall, Fielding was elected president of the society; a position which he held until his death, which happened on the 3rd of March, 1855, in his sixty-eighth year. He was buried at Hove, near Brighton, where he had resided for many years.

We have seen the "drawing-master practice" of Payne and Glover, leading, in the one case, to extreme mannerism, in the other, to a stereotyped handling, common to all parts of his work. Fielding's art also gradually suffered from his practice as a teacher. Obliged to make showy drawings before his pupils, and occasionally to indulge them with special "fire-works," in the shape of rapid and dexterous execution, methods of obtaining texture and handling by working on wet paper, by breading-out, or by the free use of the sponge; these manipulative tricks gradually became too apparent in his pictures, and individuality and truth are sometimes sacrificed to them.

Space is one of the qualities Fielding obtained in his pictures: he delights in distances, extensive flats, and rolling downs. It is true that while space is often attained the result is emptiness. Thus, in the "South Downs, Devon," (No. 519, South Kensington Museum,) we have space, but with it we have also poverty. One wonders what has induced the painter to take such a subject for his picture; and it is but one of many of the same kind. It consists of a broken, sandy foreground with little weedage, a middle distance of barren down, with a thin thread of road leading to a mill on a far-off hill-top, a labourer driving three or four cows into a hollow, a splash of weak blue distance, and a thin, vapoury sky, with one cloud in the zenith. It is true that the moisture and mist of a dewy morning are well expressed; but the picture is poor and vapid—the more so that the effect is produced by washing and sponging: by removing what little of detail the painter had put on the paper, rather than, with delicate tints, building up the mysterious intricacy of

objects partially veiled by mist and distance. The difference will at once be seen if we turn from this picture to the "Hornby Castle," by Turner, which hangs near it. Examine his distant hills, and we shall see the multitudinous foliage of the hill-side treated with the most delicate breadth of misty sunlight. Searched with the glass as we should sweep the distance in Nature with a telescope, details treated with the most refined truth, yet thoroughly subordinate to the effect of the whole, open out to our examination. "The Vale of Irthing" (No. 519 in the same collection,) is a better specimen of Fielding's powers; but even this is far too much washed and scraped and rubbed and teased, so that the execution preponderates, to the loss of freshness and truth. In seeking to give a general tone to the whole picture, he has made even the sky hot and brassy, and the lights of the clouds, as of the whole picture, having been obtained by wiping out, the result throughout is an unpleasant woolliness; while not a single weed in the foreground is executed with sharpness, or distinguishable truth. These pictures were painted severally in 1846 and 1850.

Fielding painted many marine pictures. From his long residence on the coast, constantly in presence of the ocean under every effect of calm and storm, some of these are among his best works. But they have too much of recipe in them; too much of that power of achieving at once a pleasant respectability which is so fatal to improvement. We have constantly the same alternations of sunlit sea with ranges of shade; the same ochrey sail contrasted with the spreading rain-cloud; varied and shifted in position, no doubt, in different pictures, but essentially the same. Though not wanting

in truth, and agreeable and pleasant to the eye, his works rarely excite us with the feeling of any new combination or novel treatment of natural effects.

We have said that early connections turned Fielding from practising oil painting; but this was not wholly the case—he continued occasionally to paint works in that medium. Sir Matthew White Ridley, Bart., of Carlton Terrace, has two large paintings in oil, of much ability, by him, which will be admired by those who like "compositions" in the brown school, having merit for the combination of grand forms, put together with skill, if without much nature. But the time for such works had passed away with the advent of such painters as Collins, Constable and Cox, gradually leading on to the imitative school—a good initiative for the landscape painter, but which has been wrongly upheld as the end, instead of the beginning, of true art. On the whole, it must be said that Fielding influenced the social status of art, rather than advanced it, by his own powers. His pictures show much talent, arising more from his adopting the progress made by others than from any large share of natural genius of his own. He was a man of kindly nature and gentlemanly manners, and promoted the interests of water-colour painting by his practice, though he did not advance the art.

CHAPTER XV.

FRESCO-PAINTING AND STATE PATRONAGE.

The Public recognize, in the Destruction of the Houses of Parliament, an Opportunity to promote Art—House of Commons' Committee recommend the Opportunity should not be lost—Royal Commission issued to effect this Object—Its Constitution and Influence—Inflated Hopes raised among Artists and the Public—The Commission adopt Fresco-painting for the Decoration of the New Parliamentary Palace—And invite Competition—A second Competition—and a third—The Exhibition in Westminster Hall—Disappointment of the Profession—One Fresco completed—Delays of the Commission—And strange Conditions proposed to the Artists—A Competition in Oil Paintings—But no Employment to the Competitors—The Public lose Patience—The House of Commons refuse a Vote of Money—The fancy Tudor Portraits—Commissioners defend their Proceedings—And abandon Fresco—Their final Report—And Failure—Opinion upon their Acts—And their Influence on Art.

In a previous chapter we have traced the zealous attempts made by the lay directors of the British Institution to foster and promote art in England. The scheme of our work now leads us to consider the efforts which have been made by the State with the same great purpose. The first attempt of the State to patronize art, was the employment of our sculptors to commemorate the heroes of the French revolutionary war, by the erection of public monuments in St. Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey; but the great and primary object really was to distinguish the brave soldiers who had fallen, irrespective of any scheme for the advancement of art. There was

little difficulty in giving commissions to our most eminent sculptors, and appointing places for their works in our two great national mausoleums; and having done this the public purse-strings were again drawn tight, and art and its interests were overlooked and forgotten. Much had not been achieved, and upon what had been attempted criticism was very severe. But the public were not disabused of the notion that high art—by which they meant large historic works—could only succeed in this country when aided by public patronage. State bounties had been given for catching and curing herrings, and this false commercial principle was thought to be applicable to the productions of mind and genius.

So when accident brought opportunity, all were ready to seize it; and when one evening in October, 1831, the Houses of Parliament burst into flames, and the trusty porter of the Royal Academy announced the event to the students in the library—"Now, gentlemen; now, you young architects, there's a fine chance for you; the Parliament House is all afire;" he only expressed what soon became the received public opinion. The extensive destruction caused by the fire was looked upon by all as affording a large opportunity for the development of native art by State patronage; and accordingly, when Sir Charles Barry's great design began to assume completeness in its magnificent proportions, the House of Commons (on the motion of Mr. Benjamin Hawes, an independent member), without explanation or discussion, appointed, in April, 1841, "a select committee to take into consideration the promotion of the fine arts of this country in connection with the rebuilding of the Houses of Parliament." This committee sat nine times; they

examined Sir Charles Barry (then Mr. Barry), Sir Martin Shee, president of the Royal Academy, Mr. Dyce, the superintendent of the Government School of Design, Sir Charles Eastlake (then Mr. Eastlake), Mr. Fradelle, an artist, and two or three well-known amateurs. Then the dissolution of the Parliament being imminent, the committee were compelled to close their inquiry, and they reported that they "had obtained the opinions of some very distinguished professors and admirers of art, and are unanimous upon one point, viz., that so important and national a work as the erection of the two Houses of Parliament affords an opportunity which ought not to be neglected, of encouraging not only the higher, but every subordinate branch of fine art in this country."

The committee had not had time to consider the plan by which the great national work they recommended should be carried out, but they thought that a Royal Commission might be appointed to assist, both with information and advice, some department of the Government which should be solely responsible; and that the advice and assistance of persons who are competent from their knowledge of art and their acquaintance with great public works, both at home and abroad, should be called in to propose, in conjunction with the architect, the most effectual means of attaining the chief object aimed at—the encouragement of the fine arts of the country. The pattern presented to the committee by the dilettanti was Munich—the theme, the munificence of the Bavarian monarch. Fresco painting which had been revived there, was to be introduced and naturalized here, and we are at once told by the committee, that this

great art "must depend for its encouragement upon direct public patronage," and that "the space which it demands for its free development, and the subjects which it is peculiarly fitted to illustrate, combine to point out national buildings as almost the only proper sphere for the display of its peculiar characteristics, grandeur, breadth, and simplicity." And the committee recommended fresco painting for adoption. Yet they did so, quite unsupported by the distinguished artists whose opinions they had sought. Sir Martin Shee did not recommend fresco: he believed that, in our country, oil would be much more durable than fresco. Mr. Fradelle preferred oil to fresco, and thought oil of more certain preservation: he was decidedly of opinion that oil would stand better than fresco in this country. Mr. Eastlake thought "the peculiar merits of the English school are of a nature which are perhaps the least fit to be displayed in fresco," and when pressed as to which he recommended, oil or fresco, as giving the greatest encouragement to art, he said—and his answer shows that he clearly foresaw the great difficulties of the proposed scheme,—"One great advantage in oil painting would be that the employment would be more diffused. I have already said that in an extensive cycle of fresco subjects, it would be absolutely necessary that there should be one directing head, and that it would be very difficult for established painters of equal reputation to act in concert in that way, as it would be only possible to have a director and subordinate assistants. In the other case, of detached oil pictures, any number of artists might be employed independent of each other;" and then in order to attain individual control, he admits

that fresco would be more desirable. He, in fact, saw the necessity, if fresco were to be used, of adopting the atelier system, which has never found favour among the artists of the English school.

When the new Parliament met, Sir Robert Peel, then prime minister, stated that instead of re-appointing a select committee, he purposed to recommend the appointment of a Royal Commission for the completion of the inquiry; and no time was lost. Her Majesty's commission was opened in November, 1841. It comprised twenty-one members, and directed them to inquire and report "whether advantage may not be taken of the rebuilding of our palace at Westminster, wherein our Parliament is wont to assemble, for the purpose of promoting and encouraging the fine arts in our United Kingdom, and in what manner an object of so much importance would be most effectually promoted." The lamented Prince Consort was placed at the head of the commission, surrounded by the most eminent statesmen of all parties, with some representatives of the literature and dilettantism of the country: art was strangely omitted, except by the appointment of Mr. Eastlake as the secretary. The commission was, in fact, admirably constituted for the determination of the most abstract questions of State policy, rather than to descend to technical art matters, such as the relative merits of oil or fresco, the most fitting subjects, or the most appropriate places for picture decorations. Yet we cannot suppose men of such high rank, so able in their own sphere of action, so used to judge and to decide, would be consulted and remain silent. No; with the lights they possessed, and applying the principles of reasoning

to which they had been trained, they would, we must conclude, express confident opinions; which, having no basis in a trained art judgment, might by chance be right, but must by rule be wrong. Such an array of distinguished men was therefore illusory; and worse:—they could not be rulers in art matters, and could hardly be ruled. The Prince was young to us. We had not yet had the fortune to appreciate his knowledge and love of art, his sound judgment, and his zealous desire to promote the art and industry of his country. Yet we should have had better hopes of the commission, had its decisions depended upon the Prince and their execution upon his secretary; than whom none could possess higher qualifications for this difficult, almost invidious task.

But at the time the special capabilities of her Majesty's commissioners were not discussed: all were dazzled by their rank and influence. The court, the senate, the public purse even, seemed subject to them. All thought that a new era had arrived for art. Young painters dreamed of heroic subjects and unlimited State commissions; and if a few of the elder and more experienced took a more correct view of the situation, yet all expressed a desire to assist in such a great scheme for the promotion of high art in England. Haydon, who was of opinion that by the closing of the Continent to English artists, "we escaped the contagion of David's brickdust, which infected the Continent; and that the frescoes are but a branch of the same upas-root, grafted upon Albert Durer's hardness, Cimabue's Gothicism, and the gilt inanity of the middle ages," now changed his note, and in a lecture at the Royal Institution said—

"If the commission heroically adopt fresco, the effect on British art will be tremendous. The provinces I know to be silent volcanoes; and all classes will be astonished at the interest suddenly displayed, if fresco be baffled by timidity or intrigue:"—opinions emanating from the unfortunate painter's excited imagination, rather than founded on his judgment.

Expectation was on tip-toe, and it was soon gratified. Within six months the commissioners made their first report. They, of course, expressed their opinion, echoing the words of their commission, "that it would be expedient that advantage should be taken of the rebuilding of the Houses of Parliament, for the purpose of promoting and encouraging the fine arts of the United Kingdom." And then with regard to the employment of fresco, they cautiously say, "They have not yet been able to satisfy themselves that the art of fresco painting has hitherto been sufficiently cultivated in this country to justify them in recommending that it should be so employed; and in order to assist them in forming a judgment, they proposed that artists should be invited to enter into a competition by cartoons;" and they announced premiums chiefly, but not exclusively, in reference to fresco; explaining that oil painting and sculpture would receive further consideration. The conditions of competition were appended to the report. The premiums offered were three of 300*l.* each, three of 200*l.* each, and five of 100*l.* each. The time named for the reception of the works was the first week in May, 1843. There was also appended, among other matter, a valuable report by the secretary—"The general Object of the Commission, considered in relation to the state and prospects of the English School of

Painting," in which it was argued that high art is best displayed in large works; that large paintings have not met with encouragement from private patronage; and that fresco is the best material for the display of high art on a grand scale.

The commissioners thus came to the same conclusions as the committee of the House of Commons, and they virtually adopted fresco as the medium of decoration; but they desired to proceed tentatively, cautiously, and took care to secure a means of retreat. They proposed to naturalize and apply to great purposes an alien art—an art which rose in Italy by slow degrees, grew up step by step in the hands of earnest men, religious enthusiasts, working in the spirit and feeling of their age, who believed themselves to be, and truly were, the teachers, not only of ignorant men who knew not how to read, but of all classes, and especially of those of their own religious faith. So inspired, a succession of great artists reached excellence. In our own times we had seen the same art transplanted into Germany, and under the patronage of a generous Prince, the attempt made by one effort to transplant to a strange soil, the thought and labour of generations alien in all things. But who that has seen these attempts—works of the intellect rather than the feeling—without spontaneity, descending even to the burlesque, will say that they afford examples for our imitation?

In France, where the national art was better suited to fresco, it was also tried: the Church of St. Vincent de Paul was decorated in fresco painting before the year 1825; but the French artists have reverted to oil, and few great works in their capital have been executed in

fresco. Our own artists had long admired the fresco works of the great Italian painters, which are well known to them: but they had not thought fresco suited to the qualities in which they excelled, or to the expression of their art; though some exceptional attempts had been made by them. Sir David Wilkie wrote from Rome in 1827, "It has frequently occurred to me, that the restoration and introduction of fresco painting into England would give a chance for the cultivation of the higher styles of art. We that possess so much, and think we know so much, know nothing of fresco. . . . Its qualities are essentially different from oil painting. It is more abstract, less deceptive, can be seen further in any light and in less light; though equally ornamental, it has not the palliatives of oil; though advantageous for the display of beauty, grandeur, and style, it cannot, like oil, give interest by softening or concealment to the mean form or the low subject. An oil picture is a piece of furniture to be changed or removed at pleasure, while the fresco is a part of the fabric itself, combining sculpture and architecture, historic truth and poetic fiction, in one wide range to illustrate the purpose of the building, which, be it the gorgeous palace or the solemn temple, derives from fresco a most impressive splendour and dignity." While nothing could be more foreign than fresco to the art which Wilkie practised, its merits and advantages were well understood and described by him. Its processes are, we assume, generally known to consist in the application of the colours on the surface of a wall newly plastered, in which they are imbibed by the chemical action of the lime in drying; and that so much of the surface only is prepared from

day to day as may be finished at once by the artist, who traces such daily portions of his work from a prepared cartoon drawing of his whole subject, removing after the labour of the day is completed, all that he had not time to finish completely.

The commission had adopted the principle of competition: perhaps with the extended hopes that had been raised, they had no other alternative than to give all a chance, however illusory; yet competition is very distasteful, and it can be hardly expected that artists who have already established a reputation will peril it by entering into public competitions, where they are, moreover, usually exposed to the uncertain issue of a lay judgment. We know that many eminent men in every branch of the profession habitually refuse to do so, and Sir Martin A. Shee, when before the House of Commons, went out of his way to say, unasked, that he was opposed to competition. Nor can it be conceded, that by such a course State patronage aided by State premiums can generate artists; that there is any trained genius whose light is hidden till called to life by such unhealthy stimulants, or that, with the large facilities to publicity which our numerous exhibitions afford, there could exist any artist who had attained excellence, even in drawing the figure, whose merits would not be well known in his profession, and of whose powers a good estimate might not be formed. The system of competition in art has, we fear, been generally prejudicial. We believe that the true mode of obtaining a good work of art is to select the artist of the highest acknowledged ability, and explaining fully the object desired, to leave the work as much as possible to his unfettered judgment and skill; relying

rather upon his reputation, which is at stake, than upon the conflicting opinions, and, too frequently, the crude notions, of a committee. Their powers would be sufficiently exercised in the selection of the artist whose talent most specially fits him for the production of the particular work they contemplate.

But to return. In July, 1843, the commissioners made their second report. They stated that the competition in cartoons (which we have just described) had taken place, "and that they are satisfied with the evidence of ability afforded," and they added, "having satisfied ourselves respecting the attainments of many British artists in the practice of cartoon drawing, and respecting their capacity to attain excellence in those qualities which are essential in historical painting, we now propose, in pursuance of the plan before announced by us, to invite artists to exhibit specimens of fresco painting of a moderate size, which, by being portable, will enable all candidates for employment in that method of painting to send in works exhibiting their qualifications therein as painters and colorists, and which taken together with their larger compositions in drawing which they have exhibited or may exhibit, and with other existing evidences of their talents, may enable us to proceed to the selection of artists for the decoration in fresco of certain portions of the palace." To this second invitation many of the artists again responded, and a second exhibition of their works took place in Westminster Hall in the summer of 1844. Omitting sculpture, which is without the scope of our work, we find that eighty-four works were contributed by fifty-six painters. They were chiefly by young artists rising into note; and by men who

had been long known for their large historic compositions, which they had not found a public to appreciate; with some crude attempts by men hitherto unknown.

The commissioners were again "satisfied." In their third report, dated 9th July, 1844, they state that the exhibition proposed in their preceding report has taken place, "and that, considering the inexperience even of the best artists in the practice of fresco painting, we are satisfied with the promise of superior skill which has been afforded; and we are of opinion that several of the specimens of fresco painting which have been submitted to us, taken together with the cartoons before exhibited by the artists, or with other existing evidences of their talents, justify us in suggesting further measures, with a view to the execution of fresco paintings in portions of the palace at Westminster. With this view, we propose to commission six artists, selected by us from among the present exhibitors in Westminster Hall, to furnish designs, coloured sketches and specimens of fresco painting, for certain subjects proposed by us to be executed in the House of Lords, at the same time not binding ourselves to employ such artists finally."

The commissioners had already allured the profession into two competitive displays of their works. First, of cartoons drawn to a large scale, and necessarily involving the cost, not only of much thought and labour, but also of models; always a serious expense to the young artist. Secondly, of specimens of fresco painting, a new material requiring some experimental practice, and, while attended by expense, leading men aside from the direct pursuit of their own art—the promptings of their own imaginings. Yet, after these labours and trials, the commis-

sioners proposed, not to select the painters for employment on the great works in the expectation of which they had been stimulated to make such costly efforts; but to select six, and to require these fortunate men to furnish cartoon designs from subjects appointed to each, with coloured sketches and specimens of fresco painting; so that these men's power of drawing,—of which the commissioners had already expressed themselves as "satisfied with the evidence of ability afforded" in the cartoon competition, and also as "satisfied with the promise of superior skill which had been afforded" in the fresco specimens sent by them to the second competition,—was still to undergo another ordeal: for the commissioners "did not bind themselves to employ such artists finally," and in fact did not. But this was not all: the commissioners, subsequently we assume, for the notice in the printed documents to which we have referred nowhere bears a date—"being desirous of giving a further opportunity to artists other than the above, to exhibit specimens of their ability in cartoon drawing and fresco painting, hereby give notice:—1. That the six subjects above mentioned are offered for general competition. 2. That three premiums of 200*l.* each will be given to the artists who shall furnish specimens which shall respectively be deemed worthy of one of the said premiums, by judges to be appointed to decide on the relative merits of the works. 3. Each artist is required to prepare a cartoon, being a design for one of the aforesaid subjects, 9 ft. 3 in. wide by 16 ft. high," also a coloured sketch and a specimen of fresco painting.

The commission was approaching the completion of

its third year of dilettante labour, without having yet given a single commission for a painting on the palace walls, and the commissioners now issued a notice for a third competitive exhibition. After having selected six artists, who had already twice competed, and assigned to each a particular subject, her Majesty's commissioners then invited the profession, with the offer of premiums, to compete with the painters they had chosen, and upon the subjects given to them. Looking back at this proposal we feel surprised that it should ever have emanated from such a body. It was truly a strange example of State patronage, this protracted experiment made at the expense of the artists; her Majesty's commissioners avoiding the true responsibility which belonged to them; having the courage neither generously to approve nor to reject; showing no confidence in their own judgment, or in the artists whom, after such ordeals, they had selected; but making the victors in two competitions both the competitors and the objects of competition in a third.

The commissioners' fourth report, dated in April, 1845, refers to the employment of sculptors, and the selection of persons renowned in history whose effigies may be represented. But in an appendix, dated six months later than the report, premiums are offered for oil paintings—three of 500*l.* each, three of 300*l.* each, and three of 200*l.* each—the paintings to be submitted in June, 1846. In the interim, that is, in 1845, the third exhibition of paintings in fresco was held in Westminster Hall, in which the six chosen artists were to compete with all comers, were to defend and maintain the judgment of their judges and their own pre-eminence,

or, failing in this third proof, were to be set aside. The conditions issued by her Majesty's commissioners were sufficiently onerous. They required each candidate for employment to exhibit a large cartoon, a coloured sketch, and a specimen in fresco. The ardour of the young artists was still unchilled. Several, commencing a career of good promise, were again tempted to turn aside and try the grand style, to enter the lists in a competition which to their warm imaginations seemed to bring a tempting future yet nearer; while others, even against their own convictions, and quite unsupported by a talent for historic art, were led hopelessly to waste another year of their time and their substance. But in this exhibition no artists of established reputation, no member of the Academy, competed with the six elected painters. Thirty-seven painters only exhibited 116 works. Some had wisely given up further efforts, some had certainly not the means left to continue them. Most of the works sent were in fresco, some few were oil paintings on a very large scale; and it was painfully apparent that the artists had hoped by much labour and a wide-spread canvas to supply the want of that genius which alone qualifies for such works.

The fifth report, dated in August, 1845, followed within six months. After reciting that they had, as we have seen, employed six artists to make designs, without binding themselves to employ them finally, and had also advertised another general competition, the commissioners recommended, on the result of the examination of the specimens exhibited, that the six arched compartments in the House of Lords, for which they had themselves chosen the subjects for competition, should

be decorated with fresco paintings. But having been at last able to deliver themselves of this momentous decision, after nearly four years' gestation, they were "however, of opinion that it would be desirable to proceed gradually with the execution of the fresco paintings, and that one should be completed before the others were commenced;" and they resolved that this one should be the Baptism of St. Ethelbert, by Mr. Dyce, whose recent loss we have to deplore. The commissioners "meanwhile, being desirous to afford opportunities for the further practice of fresco painting, and for the cultivation of the style of design which is fitted for it," appointed five other painters, who had been distinguished in their competitive exhibitions, to fill spaces in the upper hall; and they deferred for one year, that is, till June, 1847, the competition in oil painting. To these works in the upper hall we propose to revert when their completion is reported by the commissioners.

After the lapse of another year the commissioners were able, in a sixth report dated August, 1846, to approve of one completed work, "The Baptism," in the House of Lords; taking care to record that they had previously approved of the design for it. "It presented," they said, "no imperfections as an example of fresco painting," and they considered "that it promises to agree well with the architectural and other decorations therein adopted, or to be adopted." They therefore "confirmed their former recommendation, and proposed that the remaining five compartments should be decorated when the several designs for them shall have been approved." And they add, "Being also of opinion that the satisfactory effect of Mr. Dyce's fresco is to be

referred, in a great degree, to the style of design and colouring which he has adopted, and considering it desirable that a certain conformity of style and execution should pervade paintings employed in the decoration of architecture, and which must be seen together, we deem it important (without wishing to impose undue restrictions on the invention or taste of the other artists commissioned to execute the remaining frescoes in the House of Lords), that such artists should be recommended to adapt the size of their principal figures, their style of colouring, and the degree of completeness in the execution of their works, so as to make them agree sufficiently with each other, and with the specimen already executed."

The above parenthesis is a saving clause for the commissioners, not for the artists. An opinion so expressed, from a body so carefully retaining the power of final approval, is as absolute as it was ill-judged. Fuseli said, and it is a truism, "He that follows another must be behind." To imitate another, if a Raphael, in style, colour and finish, is to abandon all originality, to substitute a tame subserviency for the freshness of thought following its own impulses, to deprive genius of its highest characteristics. And yet fresco painting offered peculiar scope for every mode of original thought and method; a point which is especially enlarged upon by Mr. Wilson, one of the masters of the Government School of Design, who was employed by the commissioners themselves to visit Italy, and who made an elaborate report to them on the subject of fresco. But we will quote this paper, which they printed in an appendix to their second report:—

"In the works of the old masters we shall find painting

in fresco in as many styles, and exhibiting as much diversity of touch and handling, as may be observed in the works of the same artists in oil. There is the same liberty of thought in the treatment of both methods, and genius exhibits its powers with as endless a diversity in the one art as in the other. We find in the frescoes of the old masters every quality of execution that has a name in oil painting, although these qualities are necessarily exemplified in different degrees; we have transparency, opacity, richness; we have thin and thick painting, nay loading, and that to an extent that cannot be contemplated in oil. We have the calm, transparent, elegant painting of the Florentines and Romans, the rich variety of the Venetians, and there are cases in which the well-nourished brush of Rembrandt seems represented in the works of the fresco-painters of the old Italian times."

Having then approved, subject to such conditions, of three out of the remaining five designs, the commissioners say, "It would not be expedient, with reference to the encouragement of British Art, or with reference to the claims which may be hereafter urged, for the commemoration of great events, to complete the series of paintings on the walls of the said palace at the present period;" and the commissioners came to the further conclusion that it is their duty "for the better guidance of present and future artists, and in order to maintain a character of harmony and unity worthy of such a building, to determine a complete scheme for the future decoration of the palace." Her Majesty's commissioners were appointed in 1841, and were commanded to report to the Queen, "the mode in which, by means of

the interior decoration of the palace of Westminster, the fine arts of this country can be most effectually encouraged;" the sole object of the commission was assuredly the encouragement of the fine arts, the decoration of the Houses of Parliament as surely only the means to that end; yet in 1846, after five years of sittings and deliberations, her Majesty's commissioners were only able to report that one painting was finished and three others commissioned. And then, turning aside to the question of decoration, they proposed, if we understand them, to consider a scheme in which the possible great events of the future may be commemorated by the artists of another generation. Was it to be supposed that the full encouragement which the very words of the commission led the artists of that day to expect—the men who, on the invitation of the commissioners, had made such serious sacrifices and exertions—was to be deferred for their successors in an uncertain future? We do not hesitate to say that bitter disappointment was experienced—disappointment founded on just expectations unfulfilled.

In the interval, the works of the painters in oil, invited by the commissioners in 1845, were received and exhibited in Westminster Hall; forming the fourth competitive exhibition. The oil medium was the practice of the English School, and many artists had lain by to make their powers known in this long-promised competition; and, stimulated by the national work before them, which all hoped to share, the profession once more with unchilled enthusiasm, though with abated confidence, submitted their works. We are not told how many were rejected—for the commissioners reserved this right—but

the catalogue shows that 124 paintings by 103 painters "were deemed by the commissioners to possess sufficient merit to entitle them to the *privilege*" of exhibition.

The paintings were, with few exceptions, of unusually large size; the canvases averaging more than 100 square feet, but many exceeding twice that size. The competitors were chiefly ambitious, young and rising men; but there were several of the elder men well known in the profession, and among them, this time, two members of the Royal Academy. Then followed the commissioners' judgment in their seventh report, dated July, 1847. The nine premiums of 300*l.* were awarded to nine of the competing exhibitors by a committee of three members of the commission, with whom were associated three Royal Academicians; and her Majesty's commissioners state "that the evidence of the ability afforded (in the competition) not only by the works of the successful candidates, but by those of many others, has been most satisfactory to us. We remark that several of the artists who had before distinguished themselves in cartoon drawing, have shown by their works exhibited on this occasion, that they are well qualified to execute oil pictures on a large scale." Then referring in a few words to the commissions for fresco painting and to the sculpture, the commissioners submit, in an appendix, their complete scheme for the future decoration of the palace; which will in all probability be relegated to a very distant future indeed.

In the conditions issued by her Majesty's commissioners relating to this exhibition, the 10th runs thus:—"Paintings which may combine appropriate subjects with a high degree of merit, shall be considered eligible

to be purchased by the nation, in order to be placed in the apartments of the palace at Westminster." Now we cannot for a moment suppose that this shadily-worded promise was meant to deceive, and after the declaration of the commissioners that the ability shown by several of the exhibitors was most satisfactory, many would naturally expect that their works would be purchased, and find an honourable place on the walls of the palace. With the artist, his time is his wealth; on its proper employment is based both the future fame and fortune of the young artist. But those who endured this competition, and indeed all that had gone before, had further to bear the large expense for models and for materials, with the necessary hire of large studios; and it is within the mark to estimate that these expenses would involve an outlay which averaged 50*l.* at the least to each of the 103 competitors, or a total of 5,150*l.*,—a sum which would probably be raised to nearly 7,500*l.*, if we knew the number of rejected pictures, and of those commenced, where the heart failed before completion crowned the work. For this *outlay*, taking no account of the loss of time, and the sad struggles of mind and heart by which it was accompanied, the commissioners awarded 3,000*l.* in premiums, and made purchases to the amount of 1,300*l.*; and this was absolutely all. No other purchases were made. Yet these works, on the large scale in which they were executed, and on the class of subjects proposed —like the large cartoons and the fresco specimens of previous competitions—were quite unsaleable, and artists were in many cases obliged to rent places where they could stow away pictures, which were only sad and depressing remembrances, and which in some cases even

they destroyed. What a curious tale would be told if we were able to trace the difficulties and hopes under which some of these works were completed, and to ascertain their ultimate fate!

But this is not all. The commissioners did not even think it necessary in their report to say one word on the subject of purchase, which formed one of the prominent inducements to competition; but, tagged to the report in the appendix, we discover a curt letter to the Treasury: "Her Majesty's Commissioners on the Fine Arts are desirous to preserve to the nation some of the paintings now submitted to the public in Westminster Hall. They have reason to think that this object may be accomplished, though not to the extent they could desire, by the employment for such purchase of the proceeds of the exhibition in Westminster Hall, without making application to the Government for additional funds at a time when the public expenditure has been unavoidably great;" and then they propose (to which the Treasury generously assents) to lay out the monies received for the exhibition of the artists' pictures (the 1,300*l.* we have mentioned) in the purchase of three of the works which stood at the head of their premium list, with a fourth which had not found a place there. State patronage of art! with what bitter truth did many in their disappointment exclaim, "mockery, delusion, snare!" This was making the war pay for the war indeed. We know little of the finance of the commission, nothing whatever of the "sums taken at the doors" during the four exhibitions by her Majesty's commissioners carrying out a great national plan. We can trace in the parliamentary papers the sums paid to the artists in premiums, and

for the works they executed, and the sums voted for the expenses of the commission; but we know nothing of the many other charges connected with this patronage of art, which were paid by the Office of Works, or under other departments or other estimates; and it is to such we assume that the commissioners refer in their strange mention of the unavoidably great public expenditure; apparently as an excuse for their petty recommendation to lay out the competitors' own earnings in the purchase of their works for the nation.

Was there one upon the commission who, gifted himself with a true love of art, felt a warm sympathy with the labours and disappointments of the artists, to whose high influence we may attribute the more earnest progress evinced by the commissioners, as announced in their eighth report, dated September, 1848? After stating in this report that three more frescoes had been completed in the House of Lords, they say, "We consider these works, the designs for which have been before approved by us, are highly satisfactory examples of fresco painting; their effect confirms us in the opinion that under certain circumstances of light and distance, fresco painting is well calculated for the purposes of decoration; while, from requiring the preparation of careful designs, the method recommends itself as being fitted to promote the study of form;" and the commissioners gave the execution of the two remaining frescoes in the House of Lords to two of the artists who had already completed subjects therein. They also employed the late Mr. Dyce, R.A., to decorate the Queen's Robing-room with the "Legend of King Arthur;" stipulating that he should receive 800*l.* a year for six years, within

which time the work (which his death in 1864 left unfinished) should be completed; and further, they had authorized four artists, whose designs they had approved, to commence their frescoes in the upper Waiting Hall. A lapse of eighteen months ensued before the next report. It was dated in March, 1850, and announced the completion of the two remaining frescoes in the House of Lords; it said they were highly satisfactory, and indicated increased skill on the part of the artists in the management of the material: it also announced the completion of the four smaller frescoes in the Upper Waiting Hall. The commissioners also gave a commission to Sir Edwin Landseer, R.A., to paint in oil three subjects connected with the chase, for the three compartments of the Peers' Refreshment Room, naming 1,500*l.* for the three paintings: a price which proved that the painter's motives in accepting it were far other than pecuniary.

The expectations with which the first proposal to promote art and decorate a palace for the Legislature had been received, could hardly have been satisfied; but they had long since been chilled by protracted delays, followed by small performances; while the profession had been wearied out by fruitless competitions and contests. It was as difficult to understand the proceedings, as the objects and aims of the commission. At the outset its views seemed to embrace the whole profession, but its first steps alienated those who enjoyed an established reputation and represented the art of the British School; and it then appeared to be the aim of the commission to train a school of young artists to whom the decorations might be entrusted. *They* might be led to exhibit works

in repeated competitions; to accept the subjects selected for them; to carry out recommendations as to style, composition, colour, and even execution; and they would submit their sketches, cartoons, and finished works for approval at every step. But no great work has ever been achieved by such means; no true genius has ever been exhibited in such leading-strings. Nor was this the idea which suggested itself to the great president of the commission, or to the future secretary, when the subject was first propounded to him by the House of Commons' committee. He contemplated entrusting complete portions of the work to one master, assisted by trained pupils, whose mind should pervade and give harmony to the whole; not, we believe, that her Majesty's commissioners should divide the work among several young artists, and attempt, by an impossible control, to attain unity and completeness by forcing them all into one groove.

In the four frescoes completed, the artists, with probably one exception, had not succeeded in adapting their art to the peculiar conditions demanded in fresco decorations. They had been told in the admirable reports by the secretary, that imperfect light requires magnitude and simplicity of parts, that distinctness may be attained by light and shade, form or colour; but they had missed these essential qualities, the principal figure in one being absolutely invisible; and they had failed to attain that dignity and repose which belong to fresco, and that subordination and symmetry of composition which are indispensable when the painter's art is employed in the decoration of the architect's. It is true that the painters had to contend with insuperable difficulties. The situa-

tions selected for them by the commissioners were quite unsuited to the proper display of high art in any medium. The three paintings opposite the throne are so deeply recessed, that they are seen as in a dark hole, and with the three opposite, have to contend against a side light, admitted on their level, and through richly stained glass; and also, with the great absence of repose, arising from the extensive employment of colour-gilding throughout the forms in the general decoration of the chamber. The architect had said, when questioned by the House of Commons' committee, that fresco paintings might "supply the place of tapestry;" but we think, in the places chosen for the painters in the House of Lords, that tapestry would have proved by far the most suitable decoration.

Meanwhile the public lost patience; they thought that little had been done, and that little unsuccessfully, and the failure of the whole scheme was already predicted. The House of Commons had, in the previous session, with grumbling and grudging, voted the sums asked for the Commission. They were irritated with the absence of responsible control over the monies when voted, and dissatisfied with the work they had got for their money; upon which they turned very critical, and when the Government asked the sum of 1,500*l.* to pay for the three oil-paintings by Sir Edwin Landseer, the House by an adverse vote, while expressing the highest estimation for the artist's talent, made him the scapegoat, and struck that amount out of the estimate. This was a very plain expression of want of confidence in her Majesty's commissioners, and a rude check to their proceedings. They had till this reported their doings yearly, but now,

above four years elapsed before another report appeared. Their tenth report was dated July, 1854, and reported the completion of eight frescoes in the Upper Waiting Hall, apologetically stating the desire of the commissioners "to afford opportunities for the further practice of fresco painting, and for the cultivation of the style of design which is fitted for it;" and they say, "these experimental works will be of use in showing what are the external qualities generally essential in fresco painting, and especially so under given local circumstances:" referring in this to the bad lighting of the apartment. The six frescoes in the House of Lords filled spaces which are, architecturally at least, well suited. But these eight in the upper hall are crammed into the four corners; two in each, at right angles, and so close that the frescoes actually meet in the angles: an arrangement which is not only utterly opposed to the architectural decorations of the chamber, but to every principle of true taste; and the lighting indeed needed the implied apology. The "given local circumstances" must truly have been a crucial test to the painters: a worse place could hardly have been found for their works, which, after above ten years' experiments, are cruelly called "experimental." Then, as to the works themselves. They were hardly completed when decay seized them; the colours underwent changes utterly destructive, flesh tints became painfully livid, greens disappeared, blues and browns changed places—a general mildew seized the whole. The ground itself was soon destroyed, it blistered, became loose and disintegrated, and soon these eight works will be out of the reach of criticism.

The commissioners also reported that four of the

frescoes proposed in their seventh report for the Queen's Robing-room had been finished, and that they consider them altogether satisfactory in regard to their general treatment, and as examples of the method of fresco painting. And further, that they have commissioned Mr. Herbert, R.A., to prepare designs for a series of frescoes in the Peers' Robing-room, according to the scheme of their seventh report; that they have assigned subjects to Messrs. Cope, R.A. and Ward, R.A., in the corridors; and propose to employ Mr. McClise, R.A., to paint the "Marriage of Strongbow and Eva," in the Painted Chamber.

Then again a long silence intervened; public opinion had not changed or moderated, when in June, 1858, the eleventh report appeared. It commenced by the announcement of error and want of judgment. Bad as had been the spaces already selected by the commissioners, for decoration, that assigned to Mr. McClise in the Painted Chamber was absolutely unfit; and the commissioners, with many words, say, "Some difficulties having been found to exist with regard to the lighting of some compartments in that locality, the work was postponed, and the artist was, at his own request, finally released from such undertaking, and the grant of public money amounting to 1,500*l.* which had been voted by Parliament for this object, was, with the consent of the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury, appropriated to the painting of twenty-eight whole-length portraits of personages connected with the Tudor family;" and of these works her Majesty's commissioners say, "Being taken from authentic sources, and executed in methods fitted to pro-

duce the style of the original works, they at once serve a decorative purpose, and constitute trustworthy resemblances of the historical personages represented."

It was clear from this report that matters had not mended. One of the most able artists who had devoted himself to the decoration of the parliamentary buildings, was commissioned to bury the offspring of his genius in a chamber so dark that the work would be invisible, and on his declining his hopeless task, the money specially voted by the House of Commons for this work, was diverted by her Majesty's commissioners—as if to show their independence of parliamentary control and remonstrance—to works of mere decoration, hardly within their province. Then as to these Tudor portraits, for which the actual cost was no less than 1,960*l.*, or 70*l.* each; they are as apocryphal as the famed Holyrood series. The artist employed, whose talent and fitness are well known, describes the "authentic sources" for his whole-lengths to be in some instances miniatures of the head only, and these doubtful, old prints and such material. For instance, the authority for James 4th of Scotland, is "several scarce old engravings,—but the head only copied from the sources referred to." One of Henry VIII.'s queens is from "a half-length etching by Hollar," probably less than three inches in size, and a "*sketch* from a miniature at the Manchester Exhibition." Others are described as from a small *copy* of a picture destroyed by fire — a contemporary miniature — and such like. Truly these are a series of fancy portraits; and what can her Majesty's commissioners mean by their statement that such mere inventions "are executed in methods fitted to produce the style of the original

works?" However, in lieu of the work and the locality Mr. McClise had abandoned, the commissioners proposed that he should paint in fresco one of the subjects in the Royal Gallery for 1,000*l.*; and they reported that Mr. Herbert had completed to their entire satisfaction a large cartoon of "Moses bringing down the Tables of the Law to the Israelites."

Hitherto the reports of the commissioners had been made in a style of the most strict official brevity; but the current of public opinion and criticism ran strongly against their doings; the completed frescoes had most of them failed, and those which afforded the most promise if completed, stood still: so in the face of these difficulties, an altered manner was adopted in the 12th report, dated in February, 1861, and the commissioners, feeling themselves on their defence, began to reason and explain. In Mr. Herbert's fresco there has undoubtedly been unnecessary delay; Mr. Dyce's, "to their extreme mortification, is still unfinished." It was not possible for Messrs. Cope and Ward to paint their frescoes on the walls, and an "expedient of painting them on movable frames was necessary." But Mr. McClise's work was the bright spot, and "his unremitting industry" was, as it richly deserved, the subject of the commissioners' especial mention. Then after all that had been said of the prominent merits of fresco, which was to create a new art in England, the commissioners quietly add:—"Finding that the process of fresco painting is imperfectly adapted for subjects containing a multiplicity of details, Mr. McClise, with the sanction of the commissioners, proceeded in the autumn of 1859 to Germany, in order to make researches into the practice of the

stereochrome or water-glass method of painting. The result has been that he adopted that method in the execution of the large wall-painting referred to, 'The Meeting of Wellington and Blucher after the Battle of Waterloo.' The method has also found favour with Mr. Herbert, who having, after repeated experiments, modified it according to his own views, professes his entire satisfaction with it."

The question, however, arises, was fresco the best method to be adopted? Did the commissioners, in the first instance, take the trouble to examine those examples of wall painting within their reach, in order to test the durability of the methods employed upon them? We had lately an opportunity of closely examining the ceiling of the Queen's bed-chamber at Hampton Court, the work of Verrio. It is painted in an oil medium on the plaster; yet it is fresher, brighter, and in better condition than pictures on canvas of the same period. The flesh is pure and rosy, the whites extremely bright, the ultramarine draperies, which seem thinly laid on over a white preparation, are most brilliant; the yellows (ochre), painted with some degree of impasto, are hard and strong when touched with the knife, the gilding in the decorative parts wholly unaltered; the only failure is in the browns, which have been thinly painted, and have partially cracked; but, as a whole, no work in fresco could have shown greater brilliancy and purity. Of course the art is meretricious and flashy, but the execution, vigorous, free and facile, is perfect. From below, it is so bright and luminous, that it looks like water colour or tempera. We must also recollect the pictures by La Guerre, on the staircase and the walls of the hall

at Marlborough House, which have been subjected to all kinds of contumely and injury, yet after a century and a half, are sounder than our newly painted frescoes. Also the curious wall paintings in Dean Street, already mentioned in the account of Hogarth. From all these we doubt if the chief question submitted to the commission received due consideration.

Having, as we have shown, upon the principle of "the least said the soonest mended," abandoned their dearly cherished fresco scheme, the commissioners prepare for the winding-up of their commission, and express their "opinion that the employment in the palace at Westminster of the best professors in painting may conduce to the credit of the artists and of the country:" adding, "At the same time, when we consider the great encouragement which has of late years been extended to painting by opulent lovers of art,—a state of things which did not exist to the same extent when this commission was appointed,—we are bound to admit that those artists could, in almost every case, be more profitably, though not more honourably, employed in other and possibly less arduous undertakings." A very significant admission of failure! The commissioners proposed no further commissions to painters or additional grants for paintings. And the end soon followed: the thirteenth and final report bears date in the succeeding month, the 11th March, 1861. The commissioners are "of opinion that the term of their prescribed duties has now arrived. The whole scheme of decorations for the palace of Westminster has been considered and decided; and trusting that the series of works now in progress can be carried on to their completion, it does not appear to us

that the commission need be continued to superintend the execution." The date of this report must, however, from the facts in the report, be erroneous, and it was not transmitted to the Secretary of State till March, 1863, when it was laid before Parliament. But we are quite unable to supply the correct date: suffice it to say the commission had expired.

We have traced the proceedings of her Majesty's Commission, with the minuteness which its intimate relation to the scheme of our work requires, as an instance of lay management, of State patronage on a large scale; and an attempt to naturalize a new art. If our opinions are not without bias, they are at least, we trust, without prejudice, and the bias such as those truly anxious for the success of the commission could scarcely be entirely free from. The constitution of the commission has already been the subject of remark. The only confidence which the artists could have felt, must have centred in the unfettered action of its royal president, and the hope that its secretary was selected as his adviser; the majority of its members were renowned for the high and onerous offices they filled, which must in reality prove a disqualification, and, the dilettanti added, did not much improve the selection; since artists, to tell the truth, have not generally much reliance on dilettanti judgments. The composition of this important commission was certainly exceptional. It did not include one of the many distinguished men who were then devoted to the practice of art: not one man who professionally represented art. Yet we know of no parallel instance. In commissions relating to questions of law, jurisprudence, or ecclesiastical matters, and there have been many,

their chief members have been of these professions, and the same course has been followed in the numerous similar inquiries in matters of science. Why should art be an exception, and the artist be told, as is so often the case, that every one is better fitted to judge of art and art interests than himself?

The artists then had a ground of distrust when the commission was issued, but they looked forward to its acts with a hope that had no foundation. It is not left to us to express an opinion upon the commission. Its failure has been generally pronounced and admitted. But passing by the inherent defect in its constitution, we may say, in conclusion, a few words on its acts. Led aside by the desire to walk in new paths, and thus give greater *éclat* to their undertaking, the commissioners attempted the introduction of fresco in opposition to the opinions of the profession, both that it was unsuited to the genius of the English School, and that it was not so likely to stand our climate as oil painting. In this attempt they failed. After several years lost in expensive experiments, we can point to no completed works in *fresco* equal to those by the same painters in oil, while the greater part of their attempts are already fast perishing. The commissioners also made competition the rule of their proceedings and the only road to their commissions,—a course by which they knew, or should have known, they would fail to secure the co-operation of artists of established reputation, the true representatives of the art of our school; and they not only selected and prescribed the exact subjects (not merely the events) for illustration, leaving as little as possible to the inventive genius of the artist,

but they, a body of laymen, fruitlessly attempted to control and direct him, by requiring the repeated submission of his works to their judgment at every stage of progress. In the selection of the localities best adapted for decoration, which the commissioners considered their especial province, they were, as we have shown in respect to the upper hall, the Prince's chamber, and, in the important consideration of light, in the House of Lords itself, singularly unfortunate; and no less so in the two corridors, mere ill-lighted passages, quite unworthy the talents of the two able painters to whom they were assigned. In these and many minor matters, the commission would have been better advised had art been duly represented.

The sole object really entrusted to the commission by her Majesty was the *inquiry* how the fine arts of the country might be encouraged and promoted. But the commission proceeded to attempt to carry out the plans they recommended; and the attempt proved disastrous. In the end, we find that two or three talented artists had been tempted to devote themselves to fresco painting, who, the commissioners admit, might be more profitably employed; and instead of the honour and reputation which the commissioners apply as a salve, we only see the works which should sustain it fading in dark places. But Mr. Hallam, one of the commissioners, said, and we think justly, "I must confess that, by the encouragement of the fine arts, as expressed by the terms of our commission, I never understood the giving employment to particular individuals, but the elevation of the national character, by the development of powers which, in ordinary circumstances, could not be adequately displayed."

What, then, has been the influence of the commission upon the profession generally? So far from art having been encouraged and promoted, we fear it has been checked and discouraged; that young men were allured from their own walks in art, tempted into hopeless competitions, with their attendant expenses, and then left sick at heart, with diminished means, and unable to regain the position they had lost. We could quote several such instances, but not one of hidden genius brought to light and fostered into excellence. As to those few employed, the case is hardly better. Not only their gains, but their true distinction in art, would have been greater had they never left their own studios; and the country might have possessed some fine works by them on canvas, instead of wasted labours in fresco.

The commissioners were, in one respect, unfortunate. They terminated their own existence—unless that may be at the last attributed to atrophy—before the completion of some works in which they might have found just cause for exultation. But these works are not in fresco. They are in the new water-glass process, by which a silica surface is given, by means of a fine syringe, to a painting in water colours. There is, unfortunately, no lengthened experience that this new process is more durable than the abandoned fresco; or that our painters are not entrusting works that would do credit to our school, with their own labours and fame, to a medium, under any circumstances, uncertain, and probably only of short duration.

CHAPTER XVI.

DYCE, R.A., AND SCHOOLS OF DESIGN.

His Birth and Education—Early Visit to Italy—Its Advantages—And Influence on his Art-career—His first Picture—Second Visit to Rome—His peculiar Studies—On his Return paints Portraits—Appointed Director of the Schools of Design—He reports on the Continental Schools—His Drawing-book—Resigns his Office—Employed on the Decoration of the Houses of Parliament—Opinion upon his Work—Re-appointed to the School of Design—But resigns, and devotes himself to Fresco Painting—His "Legend of King Arthur"—Unfinished Work—And Death—Defects in his Character—Schools of Design—Dyce's Plans and Labours—His Purpose to teach Design and establish Free Exhibitions not carried out—Establishment of the Department of Practical Art—Its large Schemes—And their complete Success—First Aims of the Art-Superintendent—His Plans for teaching Design—Improvements effected—Opinions of the French Authorities—*Godfrey Sykes*, as a Decorator.

TWENTY-FIVE years have elapsed since, as we have shown in the preceding chapter, the Government of the day, with a view to encourage historic art, offered premiums for designs for the decoration of the Houses of Parliament; more than twenty years since the commencement of the real labours of the artists employed. Of those to whom the work was entrusted, it has been our good fortune hitherto to lose but one; the others are still with us, to see the completion of their first works, and to receive their due meed of fame.

William Dyce, R.A., who has been lately taken from us, has many claims to our notice. He was not only eminent as an artist and as a representative of the new

school of fresco painting, but he was engaged in initiating the system of Government art-teaching, intended, in the first instance, to provide instruction for our artisans, and designers for manufactures; but which, under the direction of his successors, has been extended to provide sound elementary instruction open to all. This teaching is certain to have a great future influence on public taste and art progress, and its success is partly owing to the wise direction given to the system at its commencement.

William Dyce was born in Aberdeen, on the 19th September, 1806. His father was a physician in extensive practice in that city. It is not recorded whether young Dyce was from the first intended for the arts, but he received a liberal education, fitted to form his mind and to qualify him for any future pursuit or profession. He early graduated at the Marischal College in his native city, and at the age of sixteen took the degree of Master of Arts. Soon after, having adopted art as his profession, he left his native city, and in his seventeenth year entered the schools of the Royal Scottish Academy. Whether from any cause other than the desire of improvement in the metropolitan schools we know not, but he came early to London, and obtained admittance as a probationer at the Royal Academy. He himself tells us that he was dissatisfied with the instruction in these schools; and as he did not obtain his admission as a student, he determined to avail himself of opportunities afforded him of visiting the Continental schools of art.

In 1825, Dyce, being then only nineteen years of age, made a journey to Italy, to prosecute his studies amidst those great historical and monumental works which can only be fully appreciated *in situ*. On this

occasion he spent nine months in Rome. In thus early visiting the great seats of art, he differs from most of our British painters, and we can trace the influence of this early visit on all his future career. With a cultivated mind, but as yet unfettered by the prevailing tastes of his brother artists, he was brought face to face with the great works of the masters of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and the impression made on him was deep and enduring. The "propriety" and refinement of Raphael's labours seemed congenial to his taste, and gave aim to his future efforts. For a time, perhaps, the veneration with which the early masters were regarded by him, led rather to imitation than to originality, but as strength and confidence increased with years, this was cast aside, and he sought rather to work in their spirit, and to sacrifice whatever was meretricious to the higher qualities of simplicity, feeling, and expression which he found in their works.

There was another result arising from the young painter's visit to Italy, and his study of the great lunettes of Raphael, the arabesques of the Vatican, the Farnesina, and generally of the palaces and churches of Italy. He early learnt to appreciate the decorative nature of the art of the great Italian fresco painters, and to understand, as it had not yet been understood by the great body of his brother artists, that the painters of the quattro and cinque-cento were ornamentists as well as historical painters, and thought it a part of their labours to give unity to the whole scheme of decoration, by controlling the design and execution of the ornamental as well as of the pictorial parts.

This led young Dyce on his return from Rome in

1826, to prepare a set of arabesque designs, and to decorate a room in his father's house in Aberdeen; and was, no doubt, the introduction to that fuller study of ornamental art which conduced so largely to his future fame and his future usefulness. While working at this labour of love, Dyce was also employed in painting his first picture, "Bacchus Nursed by the Nymphs of Nyssa," a bold attempt as a commencement. It was exhibited in 1827 in the Royal Academy, and in the autumn of that year he again set out for Rome to continue his studies under the inspiration of the great works of Raphael, which had deeply impressed him; and which, with those of Raphael's precursors, remained throughout the rule of his faith, and the models for his imitation. Endowed with a congenial mind, he delighted in their simplicity, earnestness, and truth. On this, his second visit, Dyce remained in Italy the greater part of three years, studying diligently the frescoes and wall decorations of the earlier masters; the purity of their pictorial art, and the elegance and simplicity of the ornamental accessories with which it is often surrounded. Too many of our British artists in their visits to Italy have looked at its art merely as pictorial, and have compared with the art of other countries, its easel pictures, or at most its altar-pieces on panel or canvas, which, as capable of being detached from the walls, could be transferred from their original surroundings, and placed in museums and public galleries.

The great monumental works, the wall paintings at Padua, at Pisa, at Florence, at Assisi, at Rome, and a host of other Italian cities, had not been properly studied for their unity with the walls of the edifices they adorn,

for the monumental character which attaches to them, or that peculiar treatment which makes the spectator, in a measure, a party to the scene and subject represented. Dyce had not failed to appreciate these qualities, and if he was constrained to paint nymphs and madonnas, it was because the opportunity was as yet wanting to work out the larger views these studies had opened up to him: nay, so little encouragement was there at that time for the art he desired to follow, that on his return to Edinburgh in 1830, he passed several of his best years as a portrait painter, exhibiting, both in that city and in London, many portraits of children and others; hoping for the future when he should be called to nobler labours. Meanwhile, in 1835 he was elected an associate of the Royal Scottish Academy.

In 1836, Dyce sent to the Royal Academy a large picture of "The Descent of Venus," which attracted much notice, as, since his first work already mentioned, he had contributed only portraits to our exhibition. About this time many voices were raised to call the attention of our Government to the want of taste in the design for our staple manufactures, and the loss consequently sustained by our manufacturers in the markets of the world. Among others, Dyce, who was interested in the Trustees' School at Edinburgh, published, in conjunction with Mr. Charles Heath Wilson, a letter addressed to Lord Meadowbank, suggesting means for improving the course of instruction given there, and making it bear more fully on design, as applied to manufactures. This pamphlet led to Dyce's appointment as secretary and director to the schools just opened in London at Somerset House, and in connec-

tion with them, to his being sent to visit and report upon schools of the same character in France and Germany. His report, dated April 27, 1838, was published in the parliamentary papers of the year 1840, and contains much valuable information as to the then state of the Continental schools, and the deficiency in all of them, except that of Lyons, in any actual production of patterns or designs for manufactures; and he infers the necessity for such instruction, and for the production of designs in the schools newly founded in this country. This report led to the remodelling of our schools in conformity with Mr. Dyce's views. He undertook to prepare proper elementary works for the students, but soon found that this, together with his duties as superintendent and secretary, intrenched too much on his time to allow of the practice of his profession; and when urged in 1843 to give up more of his time to the schools, he declined to do so, and resigned his appointments in May of that year; accepting instead the office of inspector of the provincial schools, with a seat in the council, which offices he also resigned on the 10th of June, 1845.

In 1844, Dyce was elected an associate of the Royal Academy, consequent on his exhibition, in that year, of his picture of "King Joash Shooting the Arrow of Deliverance;" a picture of singular severity of style and simplicity of parts. In 1848, he was raised to full Academy honours. When the competition took place for the decoration of the Houses of Parliament, he was one of the first five commissioned to prepare cartoons for the frescoes to fill the spaces in the House of Lords; and his work, "The Baptism of King Ethelbert," was

the first one selected for execution on the walls. Without detracting from the merits of the other painters, it is clear that Dyce, from his previous study of mural painting, had best adapted his work to its purpose as a wall decoration; while his knowledge of architectural style and ornament enabled him to treat it in the spirit of the age represented. It may be objected that he has made the relations of the regal to the ecclesiastical authorities too slavish and servile, even if they are chronologically true; but if the king is slavish and mean in his submission, the priests are dignified and noble; and there are lovely contrasts of youth and childhood among the spectators, while the whole is more in the true spirit of decorative art than the picturesque treatment of his companions. He was commissioned by the Prince Consort to paint a fresco on the staircase at Osborne, of "Neptune giving the Empire of the Sea to Britannia," and also to fill one of the lunettes of the decorated summer-house in the gardens at Buckingham Palace. The former of these frescoes—a work of importance, the figures being life-size—as seen at a late visit, has remained unchanged, and may lead us to infer that those in the Houses of Parliament have suffered from acids in our gas-charged atmosphere, rather than from bad materials, imperfect execution, or an ill-constructed wall.

In 1847, Dyce again resumed his connection with the Government School of Design, being appointed one of three head masters, among whom the instruction was divided. But with great abilities he was somewhat impracticable, and constitutionally unfitted to fill any position of joint authority. He again, and finally, resigned his duties in 1849, and henceforth devoted himself almost

exclusively to fresco painting; for, although he continued occasionally to contribute works to the exhibition at the Royal Academy, his attention was almost wholly occupied with mural painting and decorative art. During this period he made a design for a window to be executed in stained glass for Ely Cathedral, and another as a memorial to the Duke of Northumberland for Alnwick. He also designed the decorative and mural paintings for the church of All Saints, in Margaret Street, Cavendish Square, and executed them in fresco on the walls; it is to be regretted that the "dim religious light" admitted into the edifice hardly suffices for their examination. But the great labour of Dyce's latter years was the preparation of cartoons for the decoration of the Queen's Robing-room in the Houses of Parliament; the subject given him by the royal commission being the mythical legend of King Arthur. The painter himself was not well pleased with the choice; but he engaged to finish the series in eight years, and during that time received the whole sum agreed upon for its completion. It no doubt is true, that the time likely to be occupied in such works was not properly ascertained when the engagement was made, and that the remuneration for artistic labour had greatly advanced during the last fifteen years: yet the House of Commons, irritated by the non-completion of the work and the incessant delays of the painter, arising partly from causes over which he had no control and partly from ill-health, complained loudly of Dyce's shortcomings, as well as of the inertness of the commission in not enforcing the engagement. The clamour was a source of great irritation to the painter, and no doubt increased a wasting illness which had

seized him. He gradually grew worse; to relieve his mind of the anxieties of the position, he wished to throw up the commission, and offered to return the amount which had been overpaid him in advance; but meanwhile he rapidly declined, and died on the 14th of February, 1864. A committee of the House reversed the whole of the engagements made by the Fine Arts Commission with the several artists employed, and the Government more than justified Dyce by the additions they made to the prices to be paid to the other artists for the works they were engaged upon on the walls of the national building.

Dyce drew the figure correctly and with grace, but without much originality of style; indeed in his work generally, he rather founded himself on the style of others than formed a style of his own. After he had passed his imitative period, his colouring was pearly and agreeable; yet we cannot rank him as a colourist. This is very apparent in the pictures in which he sought to imitate the Venetians, as in that of "Moses Watering the Flocks of Jethro," in which Giorgione was his model, but which rather caricatures Giorgione's manner than indicates the delicate contrasts and rich and full tones of the master. Animals he did not draw well, and when introduced, as in the frescoes of the Robing-room, they are wooden and stiff, and have little life or movement. Generally his works are learned rather than original, and call forth our approval in a greater degree than our love.

We have noted that the best years of Dyce's life were occupied either in fresco painting, or in forwarding the new art movement in the establishment of Schools of Design; but though winning great reputation in both

directions, in both he failed to carry out his own views. With great art knowledge, and much real talent in its application, together with methodic habits in matters of mere business, so seldom found conjoined with art, some quality was wanting to enable him to achieve complete success: he seemed ever right in theory, but in practice fell short of full fruition. He did not possess the power of controlling other men to work in harmony with him, nor of subjecting his own will, in things indifferent, to those who were his colleagues in labour or in aim. This is evidenced in both the great undertakings he was engaged upon. He was one of the earliest in the field as a fresco painter; so well prepared by the previous direction of his studies that he had little to learn of the processes, and had already mastered the true characteristics of the art, which fitted him for the great undertaking which the Prince Consort sought to initiate. His first work was very successful. His second commission was the honourable one of having the decoration of an important chamber allotted wholly to himself. He had, or should have had, the royal commission entirely with him, had he united persuasiveness with a proper degree of firmness. He was master of the position; the subject of the series of pictures appears to have been considered almost as his own suggestion; yet we know he disliked it as given to *him* to carry out. He commenced it, nevertheless, but delayed its completion. He contended with the authorities, and bore for years a series of complaints at his delay. Yet what he did finish was very successful, and we can only regret that any part of the work was left to other hands.

His labours connected with the first effort on the part

of the Government of this country to promote the spread of art were also most important; they have too intimate a connection with the future, and thus with the subject of this work, to be dismissed without a somewhat lengthy notice. In the foundation of Government schools of art, perhaps the more important work of the two in which Dyce was engaged, he was continually contending with a committee which he had not the art to lead nor the power to convince; thus his wise suggestions were either disregarded or only partially adopted, and finally it was left to others to carry into execution what he had proposed, and to enlarge on the basis he had endeavoured to prepare. Dyce's first contribution to the new movement was his valuable report on the Continental schools, and his endeavour, from their action or shortcomings, to start our own schools in the right direction. His first labour was in preparing a set of examples for their use, and he proceeded so far as to produce an elementary work of great merit, which still retains its place as the best for the purpose.

Dyce reported that in the best Continental school, that of Berlin, instruction in art, and instruction in the processes of those manufactures which required art for their decoration, was given, but that no school existed for the actual production of patterns or designs for manufactures; this third element Dyce sought to introduce into our art schools. But neither manufacturers, artisans, nor the public were prepared to meet the effort. Even in France the production of designs in such schools was unknown everywhere but in the school at Lyons. Invention indeed was not cultivated. Dyce tells us that the seventy or eighty schools of France, with the above

exception, were mere drawing and modelling schools. This is borne out by M. Belloc, director of the then principal school of Paris, that in the Rue de l'Ecole de Médecine, in his reply to one of a set of questions propounded to him by the then committee at Somerset House. Question 5. "Are pupils allowed to try to *invent* during the course of instruction? or are pupils allowed to invent or make original designs after passing through the whole course?" He answers: "La composition en dessin n'a pas été encore introduite à l'école; on a le projet de le faire." Still it is to be noticed that seventy or eighty schools of art at least were then in existence in France; nay, M. Hittorf, the architect, assured Dyce that mere drawing and modelling schools abounded in almost every street of Paris, and adds, "that they have done more for the improvement of the state, and even of the morals, of the people than could be anticipated." This led Dyce to insist upon two conditions for the improvement of the artisan: namely, first, the free exhibition of works of art to these classes, and, secondly, gratuitous drawing-schools for their instruction; neither of which propositions he was enabled to carry out.

It was not until the formation of the Department of Practical Art that much progress in any of these directions was made: it is true that sixteen or seventeen schools for art instruction had been opened in the provinces, but the course to be followed was not laid down; the instruction was rigidly confined to the artisan classes, while any collection or exhibition of objects of rare excellence in design and art-workmanship had not been even attempted. When the Department of Art was formed

and placed under a Minister of the Crown, her Majesty permitted it temporarily to occupy Marlborough House. Mr. Cole was appointed general superintendent, and Mr. Redgrave (now inspector-general for art) art-superintendent, under the President of the Board of Trade; and the Board at once passed a minute providing for the extension of art schools—for opening them to all classes—and making instruction in drawing a part of the teaching in schools for the poor; thus preparing the children of the artisan for a higher future training in schools of art. In connection with this extension of art teaching, provision was made for forming a collection of works wherein the best art was allied to handicraft skill; historical, but chiefly of those periods when the union of art and manufacture was most perfect, and the taste exercised in such productions of the highest; the museum thus formed to be opened to the public. The choice of the general superintendent was a most fortunate one; his zeal may now be measured by his success. His efforts have ever received the fullest support from the Ministers presiding over the new department. The success of the poor-school teaching may be estimated by the number at present under instruction (94,000 in 1865); while the Museum now at South Kensington has already become a great national institution, and has had immense influence on general art, as well as on the public taste.

Thus two objects which Dyce had thought desirable, but had been unable to accomplish, have been fully carried out. Hitherto the teaching afforded by the art schools had been expressly confined to artisans and designers, and every effort upon the part of others to

participate in the instruction systematically discouraged; but the general superintendent wisely perceived that it was necessary to extend the instruction, so as to improve the knowledge of the manufacturer by whom the skilled artisans were to be employed, and the taste of the consumer who was to purchase the results of their skilled labour. Under the new department the schools, formerly called Schools of Design, were now named Schools of Art, and the sound teaching they offer is thrown open to all. The result has been the increase of the art schools in the country to 100; while their pupils during the last year have reached above 16,000.

On the formation of the department a great effort was made to produce original designs suited to the manufacturing processes by which they were to be executed. In the end this attempt temporarily failed—partly from the jealousy of the manufacturers, who dreaded lest the special designs of their own workshops should be betrayed; and partly because designers, when fully educated, had for a time difficulty in obtaining employment on remunerative terms. The effort was not laid aside, but only postponed, and the great aim of the central school in London directed to the thorough training of teachers to take charge of the various art schools throughout the country. For this purpose the first labours of the art-superintendent were directed towards laying down a sound course of instruction suitable for all schools, and the selection or preparation of examples of a high class for the use of the students; with, at the same time, a mode of examination, both to test the instruction given, and to justify the department in certifying the ability of its teachers when trained, as well as

that of the general pupils, who were admitted to share the instruction offered in the schools.

The course of instruction is based on a careful and rigid training in *form;* the student commences from examples of mere abstract symmetrical forms, and is led up through ornamental forms and foliage to the highest aim of the draughtsman, the human figure; on each step in the course the student alternates examples from the flat with fuller practice from "the round," and from "the life," drawn, modelled, or painted. The next effort is to exercise the invention of the student. In a conversation with the then President of the Scottish Academy, Sir John Watson Gordon, wherein the necessity of exercising the inventive faculties of the student was dwelt upon, and of leading him on to the preparation of new designs, he wholly discouraged the attempt, saying,—"Teach invention—the thing is impossible." This, at first sight, appears a self-evident proposition; but it does not contain the whole truth, either in reference to art or to manufacture. If the student cannot be taught invention, he can be led up to it; he can be taught where to seek materials for new ideas, to store them up, and to arrange and combine them in a novel and effective manner. For this purpose the students were required at stated periods to produce collections of careful sketches of the best ornament of all periods, noting the source whence it was obtained, and the material it decorated, to improve them in the history of styles, and to give them an insight into the best practice of the best artists.

To exercise their invention, the following method was devised by the art superintendent—a method wholly

new in the use thus made of it. It consisted first in the ornamental analyses of plants and flowers, displaying each part separately according to its normal law of growth, not as they appear viewed perspectively, but diagrammatically flat to the eye; so treated, it was found that almost all plants contain many distinct ornamental elements, and that the motives to be derived from the vegetable kingdom were inexhaustible. Moreover, this flat display of the plant was specially suitable to the requirement of the manufacturer, to reproduction by painting, weaving, stamping, &c., to which naturalistic renderings do not readily lend themselves; while this treatment of the plant is also in conformity with that followed by the Oriental nations, and by the best artists of the middle ages. The third part of the course of elementary design was also entirely new in its application. It was intended to teach the pupils the laws of distribution, and the rules best adapted to cover given spaces with ornamental forms and colours. A bounding form being given, such as a circle, a lozenge, a hexagon, triangle, &c., the students were first required to place simple spots of black or white with agreeable inter-spaces over the surface. Afterwards some simple floral or leaf form is given, then a flower, or a flower combined with suitable foliage; or the students are allowed to use any ornamental forms obtainable from a given plant, to vary the colour, the colour of the ground, &c. From year to year these forms and fillings are changed throughout the schools. The plan has had a valuable effect in stimulating invention, and leading on to designs for fabrics, wall-papers, carpets, &c.

In the annual display in London of hundreds of

studies of the same form filled in with the same plant, sent up from all the schools of the department, many of them of very great merit, it is hard to find any two that approach to sameness. All the students have sound instruction in geometry, perspective, the anatomy of the bones, and exterior muscles, &c.; and those training for masters are also taught mechanical and architectural drawing. They are required to use the museum as a field for study, and thus are prepared not only to teach others, but to produce designs for manufacture in accordance with the principles of the best artists of the best times. This sound course of instruction, coupled with the teaching of the noble museum which has sprung up at South Kensington, has already made great impression on the manufactures of this country, and on the public taste by which they must be stimulated and encouraged; and we find some of the best authorities in France uniting to urge on the Emperor the necessity of new efforts to improve the Continental schools, if their manufactures are to hold their acknowledged place in the markets of the world.

Thus M. Michel Chevalier, in his introduction to the reports of the French jurors, 1862, says, "Rivals are springing up, and the pre-eminence of France in the domain of taste may, ere long, receive a shock, if we do not take proper care . . . . The upward movement is visible, above all, among the English. The whole world has been struck with the progress they have made since the last Exhibition in designs for stuffs, and in the distribution of colours, as also in carving and sculpture, and generally in articles of furniture. Previously to that date, it must be said, they were chiefly renowned for

their bad taste; but they have felt the question to be one of education," &c. And then, after speaking of the formation of the department, and the foundation of the South Kensington Museum, M. Chevalier adds that, in the schools, "A large number of young persons, of both sexes, are being trained in the arts of design by the aid of good models, and under the guidance of good professors." M. Charles Robert also, in his reports relative to primary instruction, after praising highly the superior intelligence of the French workmen, says, "While rendering to our countrymen this testimony, to which they are perhaps too much accustomed, we emphatically point to the remarkable progress of their (English) competitors; and we urge those persons who may be blinded by an exaggerated confidence in the traditional superiority of the French workmen, to reflect on the fable of the hare and the tortoise." M. Prosper Merimée also, in a report alluding to the schools at South Kensington, remarks, "With regard to the influence exercised, within so short a period, by this great institution, we fully admit the testimony of our colleagues, the English members of the jury. When questioned by us as to the causes to which they ascribed the progress so obvious in the products of their manufactures, all have assigned a chief place to the resources opened to industry by the schools at South Kensington."

Many others bear testimony, perhaps unwilling testimony, to the influence of the schools and their teaching, on manufactures. Our work relates rather to their bearing on art-teaching generally. The effect of opening the schools of art to all those who are willing to enter them, and receive a thorough grounding in the language of art,

has been to prepare a generation more competent to enjoy and appreciate it; especially in cases where genius and talent were latent, and opportunity of instruction only was wanted to give that which, while it is as necessary as "the accomplishment of verse" to the poet, is far more difficult of acquisition than *his* language; more opposed, in the labour of acquisition, to the higher mental qualities which alone constitute the true artist; and which many, no doubt, lacking these opportunities, faltered and fainted in the strife to achieve.

In concluding this chapter we may be pardoned an allusion to the success of the art-teaching of the department, as evidenced in the terra cottas of the exterior and the painted decorations of the interior of the new courts at South Kensington. These are due to the genius of *Mr. Godfrey Sykes* and a staff of assistants educated in the Sheffield School of Art. They give proofs of a distinctly formed style and great fertility of invention controlled by sound principles. It is painful to add that the revision of these sheets for press enables us to record the untimely death of Mr. Sykes, on the 28th February, 1866, in his forty-first year.

CHAPTER XVII.

OTHER INSTITUTIONS AFFECTING THE SPREAD OF ART.

Prevalence of Galleries on the Continent—Want of a National Collection of Paintings in England—Purchase of the Angerstein Pictures—Formation of a choice Collection of Works of the Italian School—British Art not duly represented—Valuable Gifts of British Pictures to the Nation—Suggestions for a Gallery of British Art and the proper Representation of the British School in the National Gallery—Great Increase of Artists—Want of Room for the Exhibition of their Works—Foundation of the Society of British Artists—Its first Members—Its Exhibitions, Schools, &c.—*Thomas C. Hofland*, Landscape Painter—*John Wilson*, Marine Painter—*George Lance*, Painter of Still Life—*William Duffield.*

In tracing the progress of the arts, we have noted the formation of various societies for their promotion; both by the king, by the artists themselves, and by amateurs and patrons of art. Two other institutions connected with the spread of art yet demand notice at our hands.

When the long period of almost universal war had ended, and a general peace had restored the finances of our country and increased the wealth of individuals, our countrymen, always the most prone to travel, resorted in great numbers to the Continent. In all the great cities of Europe they found, not only museums of works of art, but picture galleries containing the easel pictures of the great masters, freely opened for the instruction of their artists, and the use and pleasure of the public. Returning, they noted that our artists, our public, had no such

advantages, and they the less wondered that our country enjoyed no reputation on the Continent for the talent of its artists, or the taste of its manufactures. The public taste wanted cultivating to appreciate works of higher art and nobler aim, and to create a desire for manufactures decorated with less pretence and more refinement. This feeling, arising among the more travelled and educated, rapidly spread through all classes. Public opinion, gradually awakened, influenced the Government of that day, and when, on the death of Mr. John Julius Angerstein, his collection was for sale, the opportunity was taken, by its purchase in 1824, to commence a National Gallery of Pictures.

The Angerstein collection contained many very choice works, and since it became the property of the nation, it has been gradually added to by gift and by purchase; it has been of great benefit to art, a source of great instruction to the public, and, under the wise directorship of Sir Charles Eastlake, the pictures, especially by masters of the Italian school, have been increased to form a collection of which the nation may be justly proud. But for many years British art found no real place in the collection. Mr. Wornum tells us in his catalogue that "up to the year 1847, nearly a quarter of a century after its foundation, the National Gallery contained only forty-one pictures of the British school." Of these, thirteen were portraits; and of the whole number, only nine, obtained with the Angerstein collection, were purchased by the Government: the rest consisted of the irregular gifts of individuals. Even after Mr. Vernon, Mr. Sheepshanks, Mr. Turner, Mrs. Ellison, Mr. Bell, and other liberal donors, had endowed the nation with

their noble collections, there seemed no disposition on the part of the directors to purchase works of British art, so as to represent painters of merit whose works were not included in these gifts. Indeed, the British pictures were separated from the works of foreign painters, first at Marlborough House, and afterwards at Kensington; none of even our greatest masters being left to take rank with them, nor to represent our school in the great national collection. Well might one of the writers on the part of his profession declare, in an examination before a committee of the House of Lords in 1861: —"I feel that injustice is done to the British school; that it is not represented in the National Gallery; that the Gainsboroughs, the Wilsons, and the Reynolds' are thrust out," and further that "the English school should have a place there as well as any other school."

Shortly after these views were expressed a change for the better took place, and a few British pictures were purchased; among others, Gainsborough's fine "Portrait of Mrs. Siddons," Ward's "Bull," and Crome's "Mousehold Heath." In the report for 1864, made by the same writer, as keeper of the collection of British pictures in the South Kensington Museum, this change was dwelt upon, and the following propositions were made as to the disposal of British art in our public galleries. This portion of his report begins with noting that "during the last two or three years the trustees and director of the National Gallery have taken a course which appears to have given much satisfaction to the public, and to fulfil the just expectations of British artists, by purchasing, as opportunities arose, fine works of deceased British painters, to supplement the

collections already belonging to the nation by gift or purchase;" and the report goes on to say, "The question suggests itself as to how these collections may be combined and brought into unity with one another and with the National Gallery. There can be no reasonable doubt that our National Gallery should include *some* of the works of eminent *deceased* artists of the British school, as in the parallel case of those of French artists in the National Gallery of the Louvre. But a national gallery cannot be supposed to include—*First*, works by living artists, however eminent. *Secondly*, more pictures by any one artist than are sufficient properly to represent him according to his rank and position with regard to the art of all ages. *Thirdly*, works of artists which, whatever temporary reputation they may have had, are not of sufficient excellence to form part of a gallery of paintings of all schools and all periods.

"The Sheepshanks, Vernon, Turner, and other collections, though placed under separate control, contain works in all these categories; and, if it were advisable to bring them into unity, Mr. Sheepshanks, although he intended his pictures to form part of a national collection, has especially guarded those of his gift remaining at Kensington. What, then, could be done with the surplus in the event of any possible arrangement being practicable to bring the chief works of the best artists into *the* National Gallery?

"Here, again, the practice followed in France might afford some suggestions towards a solution of the difficulty. The pictures of living French artists are deposited in the Luxembourg, only to be removed into the Louvre when time and the death of the artist have esta-

blished his reputation, and have given him a title to be so placed. Would it be possible that while the general collection of British pictures should remain at Kensington, any arrangement could be adopted by which the National Gallery, wherever placed, should select from time to time representative works of the most eminent British painters from any of these collections, the rest being brought together to form a separate gallery of British art?"—*Eleventh Report of the Department of Science and Art*, 1864.

Whenever the subject of our national collections shall have its proper consideration, and a suitable division of our pictures, historically and into schools, shall be carried out, some such treatment must be adopted. It would palpably interfere with all classification to admit the collection of any donor to be kept together in the National Gallery. If such gift contained pictures by both British and foreign artists, grouping into schools would be entirely prevented by keeping the collection intact. If it consisted of a large number of pictures by a single artist (as the Turner gift, for instance), such artist, whatever might be his talent, would be unduly distinguished among the worthies of all art. Or if the gift consisted solely of pictures of the British school, its donor would most probably have been biased by personal feelings in the selection he made. It would consist of works of very unequal merit, and it would evidently be impossible to allow it to form an *imperium in imperio* in a great national classification. In the gallery of the future, justice must be done to the British school. The portraits of Reynolds and Gainsborough must find space to contend with those of Vandyke and Rubens; our land-

scape painters, Wilson and Turner, to compare with Claude and Poussin, or Constable with Ruysdael and the realistic painters of Holland; while Etty would hold successful rivalry with the great colourists and flesh painters of Venice. British art must have due recognition, and the works of our painters no longer be thrust out as unworthy to be compared with the works of foreigners; or to be hung in the same building with the pictures of the Continental schools.

About the time the Government were considering the purchase of the Angerstein collection, many causes had induced a great spread of art, a great increase in the number of artists. The schools of the Royal Academy had now been open more than fifty years for the gratuitous instruction of all who could prove any aptitude to receive it. The pictures sent to the annual exhibition had become so numerous that the space on its walls was wholly insufficient to satisfy the numerous claimants who sought to exhibit there. It may give some idea of the great increase of artists and works of art to compare the numbers of each in the first exhibition with those at the time of which we are now writing. In 1768, one hundred artists contributed 228 works of art; these numbers being but little exceeded in the following year. But in 1823 we find five hundred and forty-eight artists contributing 1,091 works; irrespective, at both periods, of honorary exhibitors. These latter numbers do not include the other metropolitan exhibitions—the British Institution, and the exhibition of the Society of Painters in Water Colours; and yet they show that the number of those following the art professionally had increased more than fivefold. The Water-Colour Society, which

for a time had opened its exhibition to the works of persons who were not members, and to pictures in oil as well as in water colours, had again reverted to its original principles of exclusiveness. The spring exhibition of the British Institution, as managed by lay directors, was unsatisfactory to the profession. The time seemed ripe for change, and in 1823 a number of artists met together to form another society to promote the better exhibition of their works. Preliminaries having been discussed, premises were secured and suitable galleries erected in Suffolk Street, Pall Mall East; and in 1824 the new "Society of British Artists" opened its first annual exhibition.

The preface of the first catalogue recites the above reasons for the formation of the society, and its usefulness as a place of sale for works of art; and invites the co-operation of artists, by stating that its regulations are framed on the most liberal scale. This appeal was well responded to, and on the first opening the new galleries contained 754 works by two hundred and fifty-six exhibitors. It was known that many of the promoters (the first president among the number) were strongly opposed to the Royal Academy, but no such hostility was expressed. A plan somewhat analogous to that of the British Institution was adopted to provide funds for the new society. Donations were sought for, and annual subscriptions, while sums were requested on loan at five per cent., with contingent advantages of admittance to the exhibitions. It would seem that the Academy was not adverse to the new society, since Sir John Soane, R.A., was one of the two most liberal donors, who contributed 100 guineas each, and we find the names

of three academicians, Northcote, Rossi, and Drummond, on the list of exhibitors. Among the first members of the society were some men already eminent, and others who soon became so. Heaphy, of whom we have already given a memoir, was the first president; Hofland, the landscape painter, the first vice-president, while the list also contained the names of J. Glover, P. Nasmyth, D. Roberts, C. Stanfield, and J. Wilson the marine painter. Among the contributors to the first exhibition (beside the above) are Haydon and his pupil G. Lance; Martin, and Rippingille; together with six others now living, who subsequently became members of the Royal Academy. It seems to have been the principle of the society at its first formation to change its officers annually, if with occasional re-elections. Thus, in the second year Hofland held the office of president, and in succession we find Stanfield, Holmes, Roberts, Prentis, Linton, &c., holding the office; but in 1841 the system appears to have been changed. In this year Mr. Hurlstone was elected president, and has held this honourable office to the present day.

In the catalogue of their second year, the members, pleased with their success, stated that the purchases and commissions from the previous year had amounted to nearly 4,000*l.*, and that the receipts for admission greatly exceeded the expenses. Like statements were continued in the catalogue up to the year 1835; after which they were not repeated. In each of the three years previous to 1835, the members "presume that the usefulness of the society will be admitted by all, more especially since they have never opposed, directly or indirectly, any existing institution for the promotion of the fine arts, but have

uniformly sought to go hand-in-hand with whatever tended to their general advancement." But while this is true, the new society had to contend with a difficulty to which the founders of the Water-Colour Society had not been subjected. They had no speciality, the scheme of their exhibition was only supplemental to that of the Academy, and it was inevitable that the older institution should offer attractions to painters of talent that would make them at times unfaithful to their first engagements. As its members rose into distinction, some of them left the society to seek admission into the Royal Academy. Stanfield and Roberts paid a pecuniary fine, and seceded. Martin and Haydon, men who throve best on a grievance, and hardly desired to be well treated, returned to the Institution, and even sent their pictures to the much-abused Academy. While many clever young artists who first won public notice at Suffolk Street, turned aside to Trafalgar Square as soon as their merits seemed to entitle them to an advantageous place on the Academy walls. This must have been sorely felt, when in 1841, the members announced that "many of those now holding a high place in the world of art, have been fostered by the society, although their works have been withdrawn from the society's exhibitions:" a result to be deplored, but which might well have been anticipated.

The affairs of the society were not prospering; the members complained that it did not receive that assistance so munificently bestowed on other art bodies. They tried to attract attention by lectures on art, by *conversazioni*, by opening the gallery in the evening, and by a winter exhibition of works of deceased artists. In 1841, a charter of incorporation was obtained from the

Crown, and shortly after, in 1847, schools were opened for the study of art. In 1848, the society announced that 100 students had entered, and that the schools were well attended: this congratulatory notice was repeated in 1849; but the Academy schools retained their old prestige, and the new school of design at Somerset House attracted all those who found difficulty in obtaining admission at Trafalgar Square, so that after 1849 the schools of the Society were closed. But while some of the members seceded from the body, and many of those who were only exhibitors were led rather by interest than by gratitude, there were still those who remained staunch to their membership. The Society of British Artists has outlived one or two other attempts at active competition, and, as managed entirely by artists and in the interests of art, we trust that it has at length obtained a footing, which for the future will ensure its prosperity and success.

We have already written of some of those who were connected with the early history of the society; of Heaphy and Glover, in our account of the Water-Colour School; of Martin and Haydon, of Nasmyth and Roberts. Hofland, one of the first presidents, deserves some notice as a successful landscape painter; John Wilson, as a painter of marine pictures; George Lance, the pupil of Haydon, as a constant exhibitor for the first ten years of the society's existence, after which, as rather a favourite with the directors of the Institution, and usually finding his pictures well hung on the walls of the Academy, he ceased to be an exhibitor with the Society of British Artists.

Thomas Christopher Hofland was born at Worksop,

in Nottinghamshire, on Christmas-day, 1777, the only son of a cotton manufacturer. The father removed to London in 1780, and, after struggling some years in his business, eventually failed just as his son had attained his nineteenth year. Young Hofland had now to settle upon some occupation for life, and devoted himself to landscape painting. Beyond a few lessons from Rathbone he had to struggle on unassisted, and to obtain knowledge as he best could, by examining such pictures as came in his way. Like most other young artists in the branch he had chosen, his chief dependence for subsistence was on teaching; but in 1799 we find him for the first time in the Academy catalogue exhibiting a "View in Cumberland," followed in 1800 by two pictures of "Morning" and "Evening," landscapes with figures, illustrating long quotations from Thomson's *Seasons*.

In the early part of the present century, when our land was continually threatened with a French invasion, men of all ranks and all ages enrolled themselves as volunteers, and young Hofland joined the King's Own company at Kew. The King took much pride in the loyalty displayed by his people, and frequently reviewed his volunteers. Hofland had the good fortune to attract his particular attention as fugleman of the corps, and was employed to make drawings of the rare plants in the collection at Kew, the King also seeking to promote the painter's interests in other quarters; but illness frustrated his Majesty's kind intention.

An opening for a teacher of drawing at Derby led Hofland to settle there for a time. After residing there several years, he came up to town to take the

opportunity of copying some landscapes by the old masters at the British Institution. His love of art influenced him to remain, and he settled in London at the close of 1811. He was very successful as a copyist, finding ready purchasers for his repetitions of Claude, Wilson, Poussin, and Gainsborough. He painted a large landscape, "A Storm off the Coast of Scarborough," obtained a premium of 100 guineas for it from the British Institution, and sold it to the Marquis of Stafford. His smaller pictures of lake scenery, founded on the studies he had made, were admired and purchased, and he became established in reputation as a landscape painter.

With a view to his art, he removed in 1816 to Twickenham, and was employed to paint a series of pictures for the Duke of Marlborough of his estate of White Knights, to which work he devoted several years. He became responsible to the engraver employed to engrave these pictures, and disputes arising, the painter was exposed to cruel disappointment and heavy loss, through confiding in the duke's promises. Hence he was obliged to return to London, and to renew his engagements as a teacher; occupying his spare time in painting, and producing at this period some of his best pictures, among others, "A View of Lake Windermere," purchased by Lord Durham, and which was exhibited in the International Exhibition of 1862. We have already seen that he was a promoter of the Society of British Artists, and one of the first members. From the time of its foundation until his death he remained true to the society, and was a regular exhibitor at Suffolk Street. In his sixty-third year he was enabled by a

commission from that true friend of art and artists, the late Earl of Egremont, to fulfil a long-cherished wish to visit Italy. He reached Naples, made many sketches at Pompeii and other spots, but on his return was seized with a fever at Florence, and reached home with his health thoroughly broken up. He lingered about two years, and journeying to take the advice of Dr. Jephson, died at Leamington, of a cancer in the stomach, on the 3rd January, 1843. His widow, who obtained some celebrity as a writer, did not long survive him. To the Suffolk Street exhibition of the year he died, he contributed three pictures. Singularly enough the last in the catalogue is the same subject as that by which he made his fame, No. 480, "A Storm off the Coast of Scarborough;" it was not quite finished, and was accompanied by a very appropriate line, "Here the last touches fell from Hofland's hand."

Hofland's landscapes were not of the imitative or realistic school. They are mostly studied compositions; he aimed, at least, at treating Nature under a poetical aspect and divested of commonplace. But the tone he adopted throughout gave great monotony to his works; while his handling wanted variety, his surface texture, and the softness with which the parts too often melted into one another, added to the prevailing want of colour, gave a feeling of insipidity to his pictures. As a painter he never rose to the first rank, since propriety rather than genius was his great characteristic.

John Wilson was another of the original members of the society who remained true to the institution, and continued to exhibit there to the last. He was born at Ayr on the 13th of August, 1774, and like his country-

man and friend Roberts, was, in his fourteenth year, apprenticed to a house painter and decorator. He served his master, Mr. John Norie of Edinburgh, duly and truly, and attained at least a knowledge of the processes of painting as adapted to larger surfaces than the usual canvas pictures of the artist; this knowledge he afterwards found highly useful, when, as an artist, he gained employment in the scene-loft of our London theatres. When he left Mr. Norie he took a few lessons in oil painting from the elder Mr. Smith, which were his only direct art-teaching. From Edinburgh he turned his steps northward, and for more than two years resided in Montrose, practising as a drawing-master. But the prospect of wealth and fame which London holds out would not allow him to remain satisfied with such unimproving drudgery. He journeyed to the metropolis, and soon found an engagement as a scene painter at Astley's Theatre in the Lambeth Road.

In 1807, we find his name for the first time as an exhibitor at the Royal Academy, No. 697, "The Falls of Clyde," the painter then living in Lambeth Marsh; again in 1809 he contributed a landscape of "Bothwell Castle," and was still residing near the place of his labours as a scene painter. Both these pictures were well placed by the "hanging committee" of that day, and each found a purchaser. In 1810 Wilson married, and was fortunate in his choice. Of a genial nature himself, fond of the society of his friends and countrymen, his married life was a happy one while it lasted; Wilson having survived his wife more than twenty-four years. In 1813, the painter exhibited at the British Institution, "The Aqueduct on the Kelven near Glasgow,"

and was afterwards a frequent exhibitor; in 1826 the directors awarded him 100*l.* for a sketch for the "Battle of Trafalgar," which he had exhibited in response to a prize offered by the Institution. We have seen that he was one of the prime movers in founding the Society of British Artists, and after the formation of the institution continued to be a constant contributor to their exhibitions.

During the latter years of his life he resided at Folkestone, where he was constantly within view of the ever-changing sea, whose moods and motions were his constant study; there he died on the 29th April, 1855, having contributed to the exhibition of that year five pictures: thus he laboured on his beloved art to the last. Wilson's education as a decorator did him good service when he turned to scene painting, and his qualities as a scene painter pervaded his easel pictures. They are bold, free, and unlaboured, the freshness and dash of the waves, the roll of the sea-borne clouds, the vessels that traverse the ocean, the boats and craft on its shores are well and faithfully rendered. The pictorial feeling was strong in him; his works want refinement of execution and are not very varied in range, but they present themselves agreeably to the eye, and render Nature vigorously and with rude truth. Social, affectionate, and true to his friendships, those who knew him personally regretted the loss of a warm friend as well as of a true artist.

Some others who were originally members of the Society have elsewhere found record in our work, and we abstain from noticing the talented men who are living members of this or other art bodies. Of those also

who were early contributors to the exhibitions at Suffolk Street, some have been noticed conjointly with painters who practised the same branches of art; but there is one who, as a constant exhibitor with the Society for the first ten years after its foundation, may well obtain that notice here which his talent deserves, as standing alone and for a long while unapproached in the walk of art he adopted.

George Lance, the painter of still-life, was born on the 24th March, 1802, at the old manor-house of Little Easton, in Essex. His father, who had previously been an officer in a regiment of light horse, was, at the time of young Lance's birth, an adjutant in the Essex Yeomanry. A handsome young man and a soldier, he won the heart of his future wife while she was yet at boarding-school, and used to relate that he eloped with her from one of the school windows. She was the daughter of Colonel Constable, of Beverley, in Yorkshire, and if the match was a hasty one, she made a good wife and mother. The elder Lance afterwards held for many years the office of inspector of the horse patrol, who were so useful in ridding the environs of London of the daring highwaymen and footpads in that day infesting the roads leading to town. As young Lance grew towards manhood, his parents determined to bring him up as a manufacturer, and placed him with some relations at Leeds; but the boy, who in youth had loved picture-books in preference to all others, had a great distaste for his new labours, and his friends soon perceived that they were not suited to him. He was allowed to return to London, and soon found a profession for himself. Walking through the British Museum, where

young artists were then, as now, permitted to copy from the marbles, he was struck with the work of one who had written on his study, "pupil of B. R. Haydon." Lance mustered up courage to ask him if Mr. Haydon would take other pupils. It was Charles Landseer whom he thus fortuitously addressed, who told him he had better make the inquiry of Haydon himself. Thither, full of trepidation, the young painter took his way, and admitted to the presence of the historical painter, faltered forth the question, "I am anxious to become an artist, and want to be one of your pupils—I am come to ask your terms." "Terms, my little fellow," answered the impetuous but generous painter,—"when I take pupils, I never look at the fathers' purses; bring me some of your works, and if I think they promise success, I will take you for nothing." And Haydon did become his master, and under him, and as a student in the Royal Academy, he learnt his art.

The adoption of his future walk in art was the result of an accident. Being set to paint some still-life as a means of improving his execution, the work was good enough to find a purchaser in Sir George Beaumont; other patrons gave like commissions, and the young artist, finding the work profitable, was gradually confirmed as a painter of still-life. In this class of art Lance was for a long time unrivalled, not only for truthful imitation of fruits, foliage, flowers, and all the varied accessories of vessels of glass, rich plate and draperies, with which they are grouped; but for most delicate execution and pleasing arrangement. To these qualities he added a strong feeling for colour, yet at times verging on meretricious vividness. His renderings

of dead game and birds of rare plumage have rarely been excelled in any school. In his picture of "Melancthon's First Misgivings of Rome," wherein a young monk, painted of the size of life, regards with pain the sensuality of an elder brother sleeping off the effects of his attack on the banquet beside him; and "The Seneschal," executed to fill one of the compartments in the dining-room at Somerleyton, he has shown powers of higher order than those of a mere painter of still-life. He died on the 18th of June, 1864, at Sunnyside, near Birkenhead.

His pupil, *William Duffield*, died before him—died just as he was developing even higher powers than his teacher. Born at Bath, he entered the schools of the Royal Academy, and afterwards studied his art under George Lance. As he advanced, he gradually adopted a larger manner than his teacher. Of this, his last exhibited picture, a "Swan and Peacock," at the British Institution in 1865 (the background painted by his friend and fellow pupil, Gilbert), is a good example, and is a work of great merit. Lying right across the front of the picture is a dead peacock, his head resting on the snowy bosom of a swan. The contrast between white and colour, light and dark, is most artistically treated without the appearance of artifice. The colour and tone are good, the execution excellent in finish, yet without the sense of tedious labour. Gilbert's share in the work which is wholly confined to the background is well defined, and is happily suited to support that of his friend. Duffield died on the 3rd of September, 1863, in his forty-sixth year. He owed his last illness to the earnest pursuit of his profession. He

was painting a dead stag, which remained in his studio for that purpose until it became extremely decayed. Unfortunately the painter, from a prior illness, had lost his sense of smell; and in the absence of the organization given to warn us of the presence of miasma he continued to work unconscious of the danger, until infection took place which caused his death.

CHAPTER XVIII.

PRESERVATION OF PICTURES.

Causes of Decay—Absence of Care in Materials used—Their Preparation by Artists' Colourmen—Reynolds's Practice—Importance of the Ground—Works suffering from bad Grounds—Improper Pigments used—Made worse by Varnishings—Use of Asphaltum by Reynolds, Wilkie, Hilton, and others—Wilkie's Mode of using it—Sound State of Gainsborough's Works—Compared with Reynolds's—Attempts to repair Defects from Asphaltum futile—Only Means to be used—Other improper Vehicles—Their Effects and Means of Remedy—More Caution now used by Painters—Neglected State of Paintings—Absence of all Care—Injudicious Cleaning—And Dusting—Ventilation of Galleries—Use of Gas—Transport of Pictures—Plans of Packing—Restoring Paintings—Reckless Repairs—False Methods used—Care of Water-Colour Drawings—On the Construction of Picture Galleries.

It has been said that "pictures have strong constitutions," which, if true, is a wonder, considering the evils they derive from their parent the painter, who indifferently employs in their production bad materials, bad vehicles, and bad execution; clothes them in bad varnishes, and gives them over to the care or carelessness of guardians or keepers, without one word of advice as to their treatment: perhaps even without the knowledge to give it. Passing out of the hands of the painter, what perils beset the after-existence of his works; how indifferently are they sheltered and preserved! Exposed to every variety of light and temperature; to the careless broom of the housemaid, to smoke, and dust, and gas;

as premature old age and decay come upon them from all these causes, shrivelling their skins and drying up their juices, quack renovators and conceited restorers are called in, who make it a boast that ignorance of the first principles of art fits them especially for their office, and that from their hands a picture comes forth "better than new." In a work like this, it will not surely be out of place, and most probably will be acceptable, if we point out some of these sources of evil, examine how they arise, show how they may be avoided, and how they may be alleviated, if they cannot be wholly cured.

First, as to bad materials. The painter of the last century took very little thought for the immortality of his own progeny, and from its birth trusted its well-being more to chance than to care. The old painters, as we have already described, would seem always to have prepared their own panels or canvases; that is to say, their preparation was carried on by pupils or apprentices under the painter's eye, and according to recipes handed down from age to age. The pupils carefully ground, washed, and tempered the colours for use, the resins, oils, and varnishes with which the colours were mixed, or which were passed over the master's work when completed, to give it proper lustre and to defend it from injury. They often also laid in the work in dead colour preparatory to the hand of the master, according to simple rules which obtained in the various schools, and of which experience had tested the value. Any new colour was thoughtfully tested before it was added to the approved stock; and the traditions of the school to which the artist belonged, and of the master under whom he received his

instruction, were treasured up and transmitted to his pupils and successors.

But when the old art died out in Lely and Kneller, and a British school arose, it deserted the "traditions of the elders," when it repudiated their works; and our great painters began to seek new pigments, new vehicles, and new methods of using them. Up to the time of Kneller, the old practice had prevailed; but when he came to this country, he brought with him a servant whose employment was to prepare all the colours and materials for his work. Northcote tells us this, and adds that Kneller afterwards set him up in business as a colour maker for artists, and that from this man's success—he being the first that kept a colour-shop in London—arose the trade of artists' colourman. Henceforward, the preparation of panels and canvases, and the grounds that cover them, the washing, grinding, and tempering of colours,—the oils and varnishes to use as vehicles, or to protect the surface of the finished work,—passed out of the hand of the painter into that of the colourman, and the former blindly used what the latter had prepared. This is a state of things to be deplored for many reasons; amongst others, that the artist is now too often ignorant of the commonest facts relating to the pigments and vehicles he uses, and so long as they are brilliant in themselves, dry rapidly, and mix well in tints with other pigments, makes little inquiry into their durability or permanency, and uses indifferently those which have received the sanction of the past, with those yet untested, because newly brought into use and notice.

Sir Joshua Reynolds was undesignedly the author of much of this mischief; deeply interested, as we have

already seen, in ascertaining the methods of the great masters of colouring, he was continually seeking new and more brilliant pigments, to enable him to rival theirs; new vehicles to give his pigments increased body; using not only the various siccative oils and resinous varnishes, simple and compounded; but the essential oils, wax, and asphaltum, were also pressed into his service, to give brilliancy, impasto, depth, or richness. Of course many of his pictures at the time of their production astonished his brother artists by their surpassing force and beauty of colour, and of course the host of admirers hastened to become imitators, and were prompt to follow his practice. The artists' colourman was called on to supply the demand for orpiment and carmine, for vegetable yellows and pitchy browns; and after a while these fugitive pigments, included with others in his lists, became accepted as of the same value as those sanctioned by use for centuries.

The subject of grounds is of the greatest importance to the future of the picture. Many of our finest works are suffering from want of due care in their preparation. If on canvas, it is essential that the ground, though firm and hard, should have due toughness and flexibility; to which end it should be thin, and have sufficient oil in its composition, and, whether on canvas or panel, just such an amount of absorbency as will admit of the proper union of the picture with it. If too absorbent, it is troublesome to the painter, and apt to make the picture heavy in the darks, while it prevents, in a degree, the use of the ground as a source of illumination to pigments used over it transparently. If too hard and impervious, the picture is apt to divide from it and blister off. This

is often the case with Turner's pictures. "The Regatta at Cowes," and the "Fishing Boats at Yarmouth," in the Sheepshanks' collection, have both a strong tendency to rise from the ground; as have also many other of his works, such as "Pope's Villa at Twickenham," the "Mercury and Herse," "The Beach at Hastings," besides many in the national collection, all which require great care on this account. The fine landscape by Callcott, "Southampton Water," the property of Mr. Gibbs, has suffered largely, and is likely to suffer from this cause; indeed it is a source of evil to many other English paintings of the period. Pictures thus endangered should, if the size permits, be covered with glass in front, and, at any rate, lined behind with painted cloth, to render them impervious to the damp; and they should be kept away from the wall against which they are hung by small blocks of cork at the four corners.

Reynolds's works are some of them liable to suffer from this cause, more especially those most free from the injurious use of asphaltum. Moreover, he was careless in overloading his pictures, repeating his work over and over again when dissatisfied with his previous labours, thus losing the benefit of a pure ground. This is exemplified by the answer he is said to have given to one who asked how a certain head had been painted. "How can I tell?" replied Reynolds; "there are at least six others under that one." Again, we are told of his turning a whole length, partly painted, upside down, and beginning the face of another portrait between the legs. Such stories, whether exactly true or not, will serve to illustrate his known carelessness in these matters.

But the works of Reynolds and of his followers, and indeed almost all the pictures of the English school up to the end of the first thirty-five years of the present century, have suffered more from the use of improper pigments than from bad grounds; amongst these the worst is bitumen in all its varied forms of asphaltum, mummy, bitumen, &c. These pitchy colours never thoroughly harden; they are readily affected by heat and change of temperature, and as they remain soft beneath the surface, any harder dryer imposed over them, either as a vehicle for the last glazings of the picture, or as a securing varnish, is certain to draw the work together, and to result in deep separation of the parts. Reynolds used this pigment mostly in the darks, for which its luminous richness so well adapts it: indeed its place can hardly be supplied by any known brown; from this cause many of the pictures of our greatest portrait painter have failed terribly in the darks, and every fresh varnishing increases the evil. It is a misfortune to pictures painted with preparations of bitumen, that the evil does not always display itself at once: indeed, under favourable circumstances, they will remain very many years without disruption; but a change in hanging, or in the temperature of the room or gallery, an exposure to the sun's rays, and above all varnishing, will, though heretofore free from harm, crack them in a few weeks.

The works of some of the contemporaries (as Wright of Derby), as well as those of the pupils and followers of Sir Joshua, have suffered from the like cause, and many of the pictures of Northcote, Opie, and Fuseli have, as to their finer qualities, perished from the use of asphaltum. Opie, when asked what medium he had used in painting

a certain picture, sarcastically replied *brains;* the retort was cutting, no doubt, but ill-placed: he wished to rebuke the littleness that thought of the *means* rather than the end of art; but a little more attention on his part to these means would have saved his works from early decay, and have prevented his being an example of bad practice to the rising school.

Notwithstanding that the evils arising from the use of bituminous pigments must have already made great progress in destroying the works of Reynolds and his immediate followers, the artists who succeeded them employed these pigments still more unreservedly. Wilkie and Hilton are notable examples, as their decaying works painfully testify. Wilkie began with simple pigments and vehicles; his "Pitlassie Fair," painted perhaps with linseed oil, still remains in sound condition, as do many others of his early and careful works; even before he went abroad, however, he began to use asphaltum, but after his return from Spain he attempted more tone and richness, and for this purpose used asphaltum not only in his darks, but mixed even with his solid lights. The manner of working with it was this:—About equal quantities of boiled oil, mastic varnish, and liquid asphaltum (asphaltum melted into the oil), were mixed together, forming a magylp that solidified or "stood up," as the painters called it, and this was the vehicle used throughout the picture, of course mixed with more asphaltum in the darks. He recommended that the dead colour of flesh should be light and grey, and in the second painting gave the low tone he required by mixing asphaltum largely with the white to form flesh tints, semi-transparent, and obtaining some share of their luminousness from the under-ground. When visitor in

the painting school, he asserted, and Hilton supported his opinion, that Titian could only be so copied. A careful study of the "Venus and Adonis," from the Dulwich Gallery, was made by one of the most talented students of the day, under their joint direction; and however beautiful at the time of its production, it now shows only a network of dark seams and corrugations. Wilkie's own picture of "The First Ear-ring," and "The Peep of Day Boys," in the Vernon Collection, are other fast decaying evidences of this dangerous practice.

Strange to say, Wilkie's pictures painted while in Spain, are uninjured and in sound condition; for which there seem to be two or three reasons. It is probable that the painter was out of the reach of the objectionable pigment, and was obliged to use some other; it would seem bone brown. Moreover, the pictures are evidently painted at once, many of them being little more than sketches; nor does it seem as if they had as yet been varnished. Several of those which are the property of her Majesty certainly have not, nor apparently that fine work, "The Confessional."

We have already referred to this picture and the manner in which it and others painted at Madrid have been carried out. And it may be noted here, how much better pictures stand which are painted with freshness and facility and with little or no repetition, than those in which the dissatisfied or fastidious artist repeats his painting many times, over work perhaps already too loaded and not sufficiently dry to receive the new layer of colour. It is this facile execution that has preserved the fine works of Gainsborough, when so many of those of his great rival are far advanced on the road to destruction.

"The Blue Boy," "The Cottage Girl," the portraits of Mrs. Sheridan and Mrs. Tickell, of Mrs. Siddons, of Mr. and Mrs. Hallett, of Lady Ligonier, of Dr. Fisher, and a host of others painted almost at once, have come down to us nearly without injury. Of Gainsborough's facility and rapidity these works give abundant evidence to the painter who examines their execution; but there is a curious collateral proof in the seventeen beautiful portraits (head and bust life-size) of the children of George III. now at Windsor; these are all dated on the back as being painted in one month, September, 1772, and have most of them the appearance of little more than a single sitting. There are also at Windsor two studies of the Duke and Duchess of Cumberland, life-size, painted on half-length canvases, but only the head completed, and these also seem the work of one sitting each; yet the colour is fresh and clear, has not changed or darkened, and except a few hair cracks the pictures are perfectly sound. Compare these with some of the noble works of Reynolds, and the latter are seen to be but a wreck of what they were; while the works in our National Gallery by Hilton (to whom allusion has also been made as one of the great authorities for the use of asphaltum) have had to be removed from time to time, in order to reverse them, that eyes and limbs may float back again to the places from which they had slipped whilst hanging on the walls!

What is best to be done with pictures cracked and flowing from the use of asphaltum? No doubt many repairers will readily undertake to bring the parts together with the pressure of a heavy iron over a strong glue, and then with a *little* repainting, and not a little varnishing, the picture for a short time will appear perfectly renovated;

yet it is but a fallacious cure. New rents will soon open, all the sooner for the strong varnishing; and the *little* repainting will be mixed up with the original, to be again *cured* by the same process. Far better is it to abstain from any attempt at repair, to cleanse the surface with fastidious care by means of cotton wool, and then to preserve the picture from dust (which sticks so readily to the pitchy surface) by means of glass, and from damp and change of atmosphere by covering up the canvas behind.

The use of improper vehicles is another cause of injury to pictures, either from cracking the colours or darkening. Most of the works of the early part of the century are painted with a magylp composed of half mastic varnish and half boiled oil; a pleasant medium to paint with, and one that stands well, when sparingly used, until the picture is varnished; but, it is to be feared, not longer. With this Wilkie's "Village Festival" and "Blind Fiddler" are painted; the latter was perfectly sound until varnished some ten years ago, when it immediately cracked down to the white ground; the same, it will be seen, has taken place in the "Parish Beadle;" and also in many of Lawrence's portraits, as well as in other pictures of that period. These cracks, however, are narrow, and look like wholesome wounds as compared with asphaltum cracks, and they may be stopped by a careful restorer; the repainting, which should be with colour ground and used with spirit varnish, being religiously confined to the white lines of the stopping, and not spread over the adjoining parts to hide the bungling clumsiness of a bad workman. But there are pictures where this mastic magylp has been used almost as freely as asphaltum was, and with some of the same evils. As a rule, mediums should be sparingly

used; but Wilkie, admiring the beautiful amber tone of the jelly-like vehicle, exclaimed, as if he had made a discovery, "Magylp is a colour!" and used it as such. This was the case with the picture of "John Knox Preaching," in which what were beautiful luminous golden lights when the work left the painter's easel, are now brown horny dirty darks. Turner practised the same folly at times; and in the sky of the "Beach of Hastings," the once brilliant lights on the edges of the rolling cumuli have become darks; and in other places there are dirty brown spots instead of fleecy golden cloudlets; formed, no doubt, of luscious touches of magylp, perhaps snatched, on the varnishing days, from some neighbouring artist's palette, where it had tempted the eye of the great landscape painter.

Fortunately a change for the better has taken place in art, and those who use the old magylp use it sparingly and with care; while the greater number of our artists paint with a harder and firmer mixture, formed of copal combined with mastic varnish: some use copal alone; and some content themselves—as did Leslie in many of his finest works—with simple linseed oil.

Such are a few hints at the causes of the decay but too visible in many of our English pictures: and it must be remembered that pictures, so sickly from their birth, require continuous nursing and careful attention to preserve them in any sort of sound condition; yet it too often happens that when once arranged on the walls, either very little further attention is paid to them, or the care and superintendence are of the worst kind. When the pictures were received for the Paris International Exhibition of 1855, and our own of 1862, it

was curious to note the condition of such valuable property. Some works had evidently never had any cleansing of their surface since the time they were painted, although they had hung during the whole period of their existence in the heart of this or other smoky towns. The tops of the frames of some and the lower interstices between the canvas and stretcher of others were the harbourage of thick layers of dirt; while the curiosities in the shape of wedges, nails, screws and filth of all kinds that were gathered between the stretcher and the canvas would have served to furnish a little museum. In many respects the loan of works formed a fortunate epoch in their condition; as while deposited in these exhibitions they were most carefully looked after and attended to, and the dust of years removed. Moreover, as to some, the possessors on their return—for once while in their possession—minutely looked them over; and if they laid the evils that had been progressing for so many years to those who had had them temporarily in charge, they were at least awakened to the sense of their decay, and likely to take better measures to preserve them in future.

Pictures belonging to the proprietors of several mansions are very apt to suffer, since they should as much as possible be kept in an equable temperature; but in the absence of the owner the house is closed, the rooms in which the pictures are hung are left without fires, and the pictures thus subjected to sudden changes of atmosphere, alternately shrinking and swelling the panels, causing them, if tight in the frames, to warp and split. Windows are open on improper days, and shut when they ought to be opened; the direct rays of the

sun are allowed to rest upon the pictures, or, what is nearly as bad, no light at all is admitted to them. It is not sufficiently known that *oil* pictures require abundant light, and that they darken and get yellow in rooms with shutters constantly closed and blinds drawn down. The following is a case in point:—

Callcott sent home his picture of "The Mouth of the Tyne" to Sir M. White Ridley, and the family leaving town shortly after, the housekeeper covered it up wholly with a coarse yellow canvas such as is used to cover the frames of pictures against the flies. On the return of the family, when the picture was uncovered, the sky was found to be changed throughout to a golden yellow. Callcott was sent for and was quite unable to account for the change; attributing it to bad oil or bad pigments. He desired to have the picture home, and in despair of any other mode of treating it, was preparing to scrape out the sky and repaint it, when by accident the picture was placed in the sun on the lawn at his house in the Mall, where it remained some hours, at the end of which time such a visible improvement had taken place that it struck him to continue the treatment, and in three or four days the picture had returned entirely to its pristine freshness: the light had bleached it.

Almost as much mischief arises from ignorant care as from want of care. The mere dusting of pictures is a work requiring some judgment; it should be done with the softest of feather brushes, and even these are dangerous when the picture has a tendency to scale or blister. Pictures are often carelessly wiped, many persons believing that a silk handkerchief can do no harm; but a glance at any old collection, and even at some of our own

public ones, will show how this has been abused: in many pictures, scales have been torn off, the canvases are cracked all round the edges, the corner pieces and the bars of the stretcher marked on the surface, by undue pressure of the hand of the careless operator as he polishes them; at times rubbing even the paint away, but at least rubbing in the dust rather than removing it. Perhaps the best preservative for old pictures beyond dusting them with the feather brush, is to have them tenderly wiped with cotton wool about once a year, by the hands of some person qualified to do this with care and judgment. The backs of all pictures, whether oil or water colour, should be covered with painted cloth to exclude air and dust.

Ill-ventilated rooms are another source of mischief to works of art. Hundreds of fine pictures are hung in close rooms lighted with numerous candles or with gas, yet without the slightest means of ventilation. It was shown in the careful report on this subject by Professors Faraday, Hoffman, and Tyndal, that the proceeds from the combustion of coal gas, unless wholly removed from the apartment, are most deleterious to pictures; but that gas unburnt was almost innocuous, and its combustion might be made most useful in promoting an active ventilation sufficient to remove all the resulting evils; and with them, those almost equally deleterious excretions arising in crowded rooms, from condensed breath, and an unchanged atmosphere.

While there are those who leave their pictures from year to year untouched and unnoticed, there are others who are continually incrusting them with coats of varnish. Under the dust or dirt of years, the picture

may remain intact, and be brought, simply by careful washing, to its first purity and freshness; but those who cover their pictures with numerous coats of varnish, either lock up numerous coats of dirt also, or, if the varnish is continually removed for new applications, remove with it the last tender and most precious finishings of the painter. And here let us again add our warning, at least in respect to British pictures, against the new invention of solving the coats of varnish on a picture, and letting them subside into a new surface. Mastic varnish enters so largely into the vehicle with which such pictures are painted, that under this treatment varnish and pigment may be found floating into one common mass.

It only remains under this head to remark upon a few of the avoidable dangers to which pictures are liable on their occasional removal from place to place. And first as to marking pictures. A practice, but too common, has been to *paste* paper labels on the back of the canvas or panel indifferently. In the latter case, it is harmless; in the former, the moisture of the paste shrinks the spot of canvas to which it is applied, and the result is a permanent lump on the surface. Again, in passing through the hands of upholsterers or packers, pictures are often numbered or marked with chalk on the back of the canvas—a still more dangerous practice—for in the hurry of so marking them, a little extra pressure cracks the picture, which as it ages, takes that singular form of crack so like a caterpillar with many legs, becoming visible as dirt or varnish gradually fills the lines. On one occasion we saw a large number of works which had been just returned

to a London agent from a provincial Exhibition, all so marked on the back of the canvas by the local authorities. Again, blows or pressure from behind should be scrupulously guarded against: the projecting corners of frames, for instance, dragged against the canvas, will result in the crack above described; and a thrust from any bluntly pointed object—from the finger or the shoulder in carrying—will produce the circular crack so often seen in old pictures, and which, from its regular web-like appearance, Turner used to express his belief was occasioned by an insect.

Great care also should be taken not to over-drive the wedges of the stretching frames, more especially when the pictures are liable to any sudden alternations of damp and dryness. Any one who has noted the great shrinkage that takes place on damping the fibres of a stretched string or cord, will be aware that some play must be allowed for these alternations, or the canvas will be torn from the stretcher, and the surface of the picture be broken up into fine hair cracks. These variations of temperature are much guarded against by lining the back of the picture with painted cloth, as already advocated.

Other injuries arise to pictures from careless or improper packing. One of the commonest errors, and certainly one of the most dangerous, is the practice of screwing the picture to the top or bottom of the case; or, when two pictures are in the same case, screwing one to the top, the other to the bottom: this should never be done; they should be slung on battens within the case. Two battens, crossing the back of the picture, should be carefully secured by screws to the most solid part of the

back of each frame, the screws being of sufficient length and depth of cut, to allow of the picture hanging beneath the batten without fear of its weight drawing the screws. The ends of these battens, projecting somewhat beyond the frame or frames, should drop, and be carefully secured, into notched racks or ledges, well fastened to the sides of the case; so that the picture should be slung within it, free everywhere but at the end of the battens. Pictures thus packed are partly on springs, and any shock on the outer case is distributed and dispersed without injury. If the case is large and deep enough, a number of pictures may be packed within it in the same manner, merely by placing the racks or notched ledges at proper intervals to keep the pictures well apart.

Before placing the battens across the frames, the wedges should be looked to and slightly tightened, and what is of still more importance, the picture properly nailed into its frame, otherwise the picture may get loose, although the frame remains secure, and rub itself to pieces with the motion in carriage. So carelessly in this respect are pictures sent away by their owners that valuable works are often received at public exhibitions quite disengaged from their fastenings. Another danger to which pictures are exposed in travelling arises from the bad construction of the frames; the flat or inner portion being mostly a separate piece, merely bradded in, or slightly secured by glued wood blocks. Such a construction, although sufficiently strong while the picture hangs on the wall, is most dangerous when it travels horizontally, exposed to the jolting of the railroad; when even if the picture is carefully fastened into the flat, the two break away from the other part of

the frame; or when the picture is very heavy—as for instance a lined picture, or a picture on panel—the thin rebate of the flat gives way, and the picture falls through, with the splintered remnants to increase the mischief. The best precaution is, in all such cases, to screw pieces across the back angles of the frame, and to screw the stretcher of the picture to them, which removes the pressure entirely from the flat; but this will not do when the picture is on panel.

Thus a few of the most obvious sources of injury, and of the causes which lead to the premature decay of pictures have been slightly glanced at; it only remains to allude to the doings of those who undertake, qualified or unqualified, to repair their injuries, to renovate their fading glories, and even to restore them to their first freshness and brightness.

Wrong, indeed, would it be to throw discredit on *all* who practise the restorer's art. Some few there are who are duly qualified; but for our own part we would put up with many blemishes ere we trusted a work we loved out of our own hands. For as in the healing art there are quacks and nostrum-mongers, and shallow or incompetent practitioners; who are always the boldest in their pretensions, and the most boastful of the universality and infallibility of their cures; so it is with the renovators of pictures; and many a one whose qualifications consist only in the reckless impudence with which he dares to use the spirit or the alkali to scour off dirt and art together, places a half-washed portrait in the window, and dubs himself a restorer. Some of these boast that their very ignorance of drawing is one of their best qualifications, since they must of necessity follow the

leadings of the painter whose work is under their hands; which is about as logical as it would be to say that we are more fully qualified to decipher a half obliterated inscription by ignorance of the language in which it is written. Too often such *renovators* use strong detergents, and wash away all the last and delicate heightenings of the painter, together with the dirt and varnish that had accumulated over his works; and then reduce the whole to a meaningless uniformity by a universal coat of stippling: perhaps at the same time heightening the *expression*, in their idea, by darkening the eyes, the eyelids, the corners of the mouth, and the nostrils, to give the vigour their labours had destroyed. In the case of injuries or blisters, a common fault is, after stopping the holes, to paint over the part with colour ground in oil. Then, in order to hide the spot, the retouching is spread far and wide round the original injury; nay, it often happens, that, led on by their conceit or their audacity, an entire face or hand is repainted, much (in their eyes) to its improvement, and the whole, highly varnished, comes back to its possesor, reputed as in the finest state. Sad it is that such evils perpetuate themselves, and the injuries of a picture come to be considered its greatest merit. To hide these wholesale restorations, a dark brown varnish is resorted to, and what is hence called "the fine golden tone" of a picture—a golden tone neither the work of the original artist, nor of the gradual mellowing influence of time, but really a false incrustation—becomes one of the sources of its estimation.

It is true that, backed up by the folly of would-be connoisseurs of the last age, "the golden tone" was so coveted that it was added as a necessary flavour to all

pictures. This perhaps arose in the first instance from the importation of smoke-browned altar-pieces, and other second rate pictures of the Bolognese school, the fashionable school at that time—works painted on a dark ground which had greatly failed in the "darks," and thus the solid whites and lights had to be toned down to bring lights and darks together. Once accepted as the true tone of a fine picture, all must be heightened or lowered to the same standard of excellence. The late Mr. Uwins used to tell of a visit he paid to De la Hante the dealer, when the fine picture of St. Nicholas, by Paul Veronese, was in his hands for sale. When he found who had come to see the picture, he took Mr. Uwins into the gallery where it was, and after they had looked at it awhile, said —"Now I will show you what this picture really is," and taking a sponge, he removed a dark coat from its surface, leaving the picture in a beautifully pure, cool, and fresh state; a state they both could fully appreciate. After they had admired it awhile, he remarked, "I may show it thus to you, but it will not do for the world to see it without the tone being renewed." Ere Uwins left, a party of dilettanti were announced; but De la Hante would not let them see it until "the golden tone" was restored. Here was a dealer, who well knew what a fine picture should be, obliged to conform to the prevailing dilettantism; but to the host of vampers-up of brown masters, this "golden tone" was a true god-send, and far too valuable an agent in their mysteries, not to be upheld with all their influence.

Goldsmith—the learned simpleton, as he was thought by the clever but shallow wits of his own day—must have been admitted behind the scenes, or he could not so well

have described the audacity of these gentry. Speaking in the person of the vicar's son, he says of one of these oracles, "There was sometimes an occasion for a more supported assurance. I remember to have seen him, after giving his opinion that the colouring of a picture was not mellow enough, very deliberately take a brush with brown varnish, that was accidentally lying by, and rub over the picture before all the company, and then ask if he had not improved the tints." The application of such a tone of course hid all the scrubbings and over-cleanings of the ignorant restorer; and when the repairs made in oil, which have been already described, changed, as they must change, to dark spots or extensive patches on the original tints, a still deeper shade of this coveted tone hid all their blotchings, and like charity, covered a multitude of sins.

Though the practice of toning pictures was mostly resorted to to enhance the beauties of the old masters, yet under the enthusiastic patronage of the dilettanti of the day it was extended to more modern works, and the ignorance of the painter as to what his picture should be, was supplied by their care. Many Wilsons, Gainsboroughs, and Reynolds, bear present testimony to their superiority of judgment. There can be no doubt that pictures were, and are, constantly over-toned as well as over-cleaned, and that pictures in our national collections have, in past days, been so treated; but, in view of the terrors of that body of experts the House of Commons, who would venture to bring them back to what the painter thought they ought to be, or he himself would have toned them? To remove such additions would raise up a storm of virtuous indignation that few

would be willing to face. This, it is true, is not to be wondered at, in face of the wholesale scrubbings that have taken place abroad, as many even of the works in the Louvre testify; whilst at Dresden, the world-famous Correggios, instead of the delicate, refined, yet luminous glazings which characterize the master's works when in a genuine state, have become solid, dry, and insipid under the hands of the restorer, who has gained fame and reputation at the expense of the poor painter; born, it would seem, only that Palmaroli might be glorified in him. At Rotterdam also the true Dutch spirit of cleanliness has reduced some of the pictures in the public collection to the mere panel.

As individuals, however, will require medical and surgical aid, so occasionally must pictures, whether from accident or premature decay; it may be difficult in an age of quacks to choose a skilled physician, and it is an equally anxious affair to have to make choice of a good restorer. Enough has been said to induce us not to resort to him on slight occasions. On more grave ones, seek out the man of the highest reputation; him, moreover, who promises the least, who has a wholesome dread of doing too much, and the strongest objection to doing anything at all. If the canvas want lining, or the panel parqueting, have it done in the best manner and by the best craftsman; but do not allow the work to be varnished, so that you can see your face in it as in a looking-glass.

Thus much as to pictures in oil; but something must be said as to works in water colour, in order to complete this section of our labours. In oil or water alike, many of the radical defects arise from the

materials used. This is especially the case with the drawings of our first water-colour painters; whose art stimulated the manufacture and improvement of papers suitable for its use, till great excellence has been attained. Originally the paper was deficient in its dimensions and surface; but it concealed more dangerous defects. Sometimes made in mills whose water-supply was impregnated with iron, ferruginous spots of foxy tint develop themselves over the surface of the drawing. Sometimes unequally or imperfectly sized, the whole surface is covered with spots of a darker tint than the colour used; or the drawing has a sunk-in woolly appearance, destructive of all sharpness and brilliancy. Again, the colours used by the early water-colour painter were no less immature. Suited only to the mere tinter, they were quite unfitted for the artist who would contend with the brilliancy and power of the oil painter. Earths (ochre, umber, and sienna), have been now supplemented by brilliant mineral or chemical products; and Prussian blue and reds of a fleeting weak character, have given way not only to better colours, but to better modes of preparation.

When, therefore, we would judge of the durability of a water-colour drawing, we must not bring the works of our early artists into comparison with the perfected excellencies attained in the present day, and ascribe their weak washed-out appearance, their want of brilliancy and sharpness, to decay alone, but rather to their original and inherent defects; among which may be classed the practice of passing a uniform tint, or wash of warm colour, often of much power, over the whole surface. Some of the early drawings, however,

exhibit great freshness and colour, undimmed by eighty years of exposure. We see this most in the water-colour works of men who practised chiefly in oil,—Ibbetson and Hamilton, for instance—whose drawings may be cited as proof of the durability of the art. Of the great works of Turner, in the two mediums, it may be safely said that up to this time his water-colour pictures, delicately beautiful as they are, have, under average treatment, suffered less than his oil paintings. We are told that on the establishment of the British Institution in 1805, the reason for the exclusion of water-colour drawings, was their want of permanence; a mere presumption, if the reason given is true, as time had not then been given to test the new art.

The two great enemies of water-colour art are exposure to sun, or the glare of strong reflected light, or to damp. Nothing so surely destroys as the sun: the colour is burnt off the paper; even the forms disappear, and every quality which gave pleasure is hopelessly destroyed. Damp is likewise destructive; but while generally affecting brilliancy, its effects are chiefly evidenced by spottiness, dark spots in the light parts, and light on the dark parts: this is often increased by bad paste used in the mounting, which gives rise to a fungous growth highly destructive to such works. In addition to these special ills, drawings are of course subject to all the mischiefs common to their fragile nature.

There is not any mystery in the due care of water-colour drawings. They require only security from sun, and damp and dirt. When kept in a portfolio, or in closed drawers, they will, if such receptacles are con-

structed properly, be safe from these united evils; but whatever may be the temperature in which they are maintained, it will be found necessary that they should from time to time be subjected to light, and warmth with its ventilating influence. When exhibited in frames their charge is no less simple. They are then always defended by glass, which should be gummed or pasted to the frame, so that the drawing may from the front be impervious to the subtle permeations of a London atmosphere. They should also be exhibited in sunk mounts to keep them from touching the glass, and should not only be pasted into the frame at the back, but additional security from damp walls, against which they may be hung, should be obtained by the use of the patent painted cloth. In moving drawings from place to place, when in folios or boxes, care must be used that they do not rub one another.

It may be proper to add a few rules as to the hanging of pictures in rooms or galleries. A small frontage to the street is one of the necessary conditions in planning London houses, and houses in most of our large towns; hence the rooms are deep in proportion to their width, and the light from narrow windows is often insufficient, they being mostly too near the side-walls, which are always dark at the end furthest from the front. This darkness is increased on one side by the usual projection of the chimney breast, and on both by the curtains and furniture, which fashion and the necessities of our climate cluster round our windows; while projecting frames to the pictures too often add to the obscurity. The wall opposite the windows, even if not too far removed from the light, is unsuitable for pictures, because the glass

over water-colour paintings, or the varnished surface of works in oil so placed, must always mirror the windows opposite, and the glitter and reflection of their light hinder any pleasure in viewing them. Hence, where any available space can be found for the purpose, most of those who love art, and collect pictures, build top-lighted galleries for their reception. It is only in such galleries that pictures can be seen to the best advantage.

The conditions for such galleries are simple and are as follows :—First, abundance of light perfectly under control, so that by blinds or shutters it can be readily increased or diminished at pleasure. Second. The skylight of the gallery should be so placed that when the spectator is in the best position to view the pictures, they shall not glitter with the reflection of the window or skylight: a condition determinable by fixed laws of optics; so that no gallery need be ill-constructed in this respect.

As a general rule, an oblong parallelogram on plan is more suitable than a square room; and in such cases it will be found that the height of the skylight should be equal to the width of the room. Thus, twenty feet wide by thirty or forty feet long, and twenty feet high, will, light well, if the skylight be properly arranged. The proper amount of light will be admitted through an opening about equal to half the superficial area of the floor, and should be as little as possible interrupted by ceiling joists, rafters, or beams. If light is too high above the pictures, as it diminishes rapidly in proportion to its distance from the source of admission, the pictures will be in half-shadow, as if in a well. If the light is too low down, glitter from the surface of the picture

is unavoidable. If the pictures are to be lighted at night, the artificial light should be so placed as to correspond in the angle of its rays with those of the natural light.

Air for ventilation should be admitted near the floor, and have abundant exit at the roof: this rule, desirable even where artificial light is not used, is an absolute necessity where it is used, if pictures are to be preserved from injury. It is most desirable, for all these reasons, that beneath the skylight, glass sashes or a glass ceiling should be introduced.

It must be repeated, however, that as the laws which regulate the proper proportion and angle of light can be laid down with absolute certainty, no gallery should be constructed without the lines having been determined by those who have studied them, and are competent to advise on the proportions adapted to a gallery of the size to be erected.

CHAPTER XIX.

PRESENT STATE OF THE ENGLISH SCHOOL.

Painters of the Past and Present Generation—Their Independence—Saved them from Imitation—Outbreak of Realism—In the German and French Schools—Pre-Raphaelism in England—Its Principles and Aims—Truth before Beauty—Nature before Grace—Not without some good Results—Errors of Non-selection—And the Imitation of Details instead of general Truths—Realistic Landscape—Its attempted minute Truth—Does not convey the Truth—Comparison with Turner's Art—Tends however to Improvement—Is opposed to showy Facility—Art-Unions—Dangers of Prosperity—Increased Prices of Art—Picture-dealers—Spread of Art—Now common to all Classes—Proposed Changes in the Royal Academy—Future of the English School.

We would conclude our sketch of British art during the century which has witnessed its birth and seen its advance to manhood, with a short review of its present state and future prospects. Our plan has precluded any comments on the veteran artists who are yet spared to us, or on those whose rising talent is to fill their places. But the question will arise, has art reached its maturity, or passed its prime? Is it yet progressing? does it halt or retrograde? It is of our nature, as we advance in life, to look back on the celebrities of our early days as hopelessly beyond the reach of the present. The poets, the actors, the orators, the painters who then charmed us are such as their degenerate successors cannot rival. This we have to guard against in forming our estimate of contemporary art. Thus our predecessors, looking

back to Reynolds and Gainsborough, might have well exclaimed, "Where are their successors?" Yet, if those great portrait painters found but inferior representatives in Lawrence and Hoppner, that same generation included such artists as Morland, Wilkie, Leslie and Mulready, who advanced the art in the branch they followed far beyond that of the age preceding them. Turner, Callcott, Constable, Crome and Collins also, if with a difference, were worthy successors of Wilson; Etty and Hilton ably sustained the credit of our school in history, and Ward in animal painting. Of the veterans who link these past worthies with the talent of the day, it is not for us to speak; yet both landscape, animal, and figure painters have, in or out of the Academy, representatives who sustain the credit of the school.

In all schools, individuals from time to time arise who carry some phase of art to a high degree of perfection, and the danger is that their contemporaries and successors neglect to study Nature for themselves, and become followers and copyists of the manner or art of these master spirits. When this occurs, the decadence of the school is rapid. The nature of English habits, and the independence of the English character, are in this respect favourable to art progress, since each man loves to think for himself. Had the landscape painters of the past generation been content to follow the manner of Wilson or Gainsborough, we should not have seen the noble works of Turner and Constable. Novelty in aim or treatment seems necessary to art progress. Wilkie, Leslie, and Mulready, with characteristic differences in their art held its great principles in common; their

reputation and the beauty of their works gathered around them imitators, while their living influence was in the schools; but, as the half-century in which they had produced their best pictures drew towards its completion, the painters of the rising school abandoned the rules of art which had guided these great landscape and figure painters, and adopted principles apparently the very opposite of theirs.

The poets of the beginning of the nineteenth century had rebelled against the conventionalisms of their predecessors both as to metre and manner, but more particularly as to their choice of subjects. They had reverted to a degree of realism which was then stigmatized as sheer puerility, and severe was the criticism that Wordsworth and his followers had to endure at the hands of critics and reviewers. Yet the rebellion against old forms of thought was on the whole healthy, and when the first reaction had somewhat subsided, it introduced new beauties, with fresher views of life and springs of thought. Music also had its rebels against authority; and art, although with us at a later period, was to experience a movement of the like nature, and to have its outbreak of realism as had poetry. First the young Germans studying their art at Rome, disgusted, no doubt, with the tame proprieties of the modern Romans—Cammuccini and his followers, whose art was built upon rules and precedents with little reference to nature and truth—broke loose from the fetters of the schools.

So earnest were these young artists in following the religious art of the early Italians, which they considered defiled by the Paganism of the Renaissance and despoiled of all fervour by Protestantism, that, headed by

Cornelius and Overbeck they went over in a body to the Church of Rome, and henceforth devoted themselves to the restoration of religious art on the basis of its pre-Raphaelite practice. Later the movement spread to France, but under a different phase; Courbet and his followers adopted realism, repudiating beauty and selection, and copying nature as she is found, rather in her meanest than under her noblest aspects.

About the year 1850, a number of young English artists just completing their studies, banded together under the name of the pre-Raphaelite Brethren; a term which they adopted to signify that henceforth they would take their stand on the art of the painters prior to Raphael, as opposed to the conventional art, as they termed it, of his school and followers. They began by publishing a weekly magazine called *The Germ*, intended to set forth their peculiar views in art and poetry. Though it is difficult to find any clear statement of what these views were, originality and truth seemed to be pointed at in the verse which accompanied the first number, and, as a motto, was printed in black letter upon the wrapper; it is as follows:—

"When whoso merely hath a little thought
Will merely think the thought which is in him—
Not imaging another's bright or dim.
Not mingling with new words what others taught.
When whoso speaks, from having either sought
Or only found, will speak, not just to skim
A shallow surface with words made and trim,
But in the very speech the matter brought;
Be not too keen to cry, 'So this is all!—
A thing I might myself have thought as well
But would not say it, for it was not worth!'
Ask, 'Is this truth?' For is it still to tell
That, be the theme a point, or the whole earth,
Truth is a circle, perfect, great or small!"

If the publication had contained nothing more intelligible, nothing more worthy of attention than the verse which heralded it into the world, there had been need of little wonder that its career was ended after the fourth number. This, however, was not the case, since some of the contributors gave promise which their pens have since fully redeemed. Still it is to their own statements at the time, and to the works they produced in the first fervour of their brotherhood, that we must look for the *principles* of the school; unless so far as we may accept them from the pen of one who has ever been their eloquent, if at times, their injudicious champion. Their first great principle was truth rather than beauty; and, therefore, non-selection in treating their subjects. Thus it was said by their able expositor, in his lectures on architecture and painting delivered at Edinburgh, 1853, that "pre-Raphaelitism has but one principle, that of absolute uncompromising truth in all that it does, obtained by working everything, down to the most minute detail, from Nature, and from Nature only. Every pre-Raphaelite landscape background is painted to the last touch in the open air, from the thing itself. Every pre-Raphaelite figure, however studied in expression, is a true portrait of some living person. Every minute accessory is painted in the same manner." Further that the pre-Raphaelite disciples rejected "that spurious beauty whose attractiveness has tempted men to forget or to despise the more noble quality of sincerity;". and also with the further uncomplimentary addition, that, "in order to put them beyond the power of temptation, they are, as a body, characterized by a total absence of sensibility to the ordinary and popular forms of artistic gracefulness."

It would appear that the protest of these young painters—and it was so far a right protest—was against worn-out conventionalisms, stale repetitions of other men's modes of thought and modes of treatment; although at that time such art was not particularly characteristic of our school. In the spirit of youth and enthusiasm this protest was, in some of them, accompanied by an indiscreet self-assertion, and an amusing despisal of all art since the end of the fifteenth century, calculated to call forth some bitterness in contemporary criticism. But on the whole it has had a good result, and art has benefited by their earnestness, and by the works they have produced; even if these have been achieved rather by overlooking their own early dogmas, than by rigidly enforcing them. The three principles which have been enunciated in the above quotations, and which are found in the first works of the brotherhood are:—The rejection of beauty, or non-selection; imitative finish of the details from Nature; equal completion of all parts of the picture. We are told that their first object is truth. "What is truth?" was mournfully asked by one who did not clearly see his way between two conflicting courses; and we may still say, what is truth? Each may decide, as he believes sincerely, but his decision will be warped by his education and his prejudices. We are also told that in pre-Raphaelite pictures each figure is a true portrait of some living person. Now as to this being one of the pre-Raphaelite efforts after truth, are not all artists accustomed to work from models? When the great Leonardo wished to paint into the "Last Supper" the head of Our Lord, he was for months seeking a model whose head might suggest to him features that he could

clothe, alas! he knew how faintly, with the deep impression of Him who sat at meat. Surely this was a right step on the part of the painter in *his* search after truth. Far more so than was his, who, painting the husband of the blessed Virgin, chose a mechanic with corny hands and sun-stained arms as a true representative, because like the holy man of old, he was a carpenter; rather than sought out one, whatever his rank of life, whose features might somewhat realize the noble and trustful nature of him who was to shield and shelter from the distrust and scandal which were likely to be her lot, the mother of Our Lord.

Then as to backgrounds. Surely in looking at the touching and earnest expression the painter has given to one who seeks to save her lover from danger and death, we do not wish to be called upon to examine how minutely he has rendered, brick by brick, the wall behind her, with its rotten mortar and crumbling surface. We are not to be provoked into admiration, even though assured that it "is painted to the last touch in the open air," from the wall itself. We rest our eyes on the earnest action, the sweet pleading expression of the woman, and feel that attention to the wall would indicate about the same amount of obtuseness on our part, as on his who, invited to see a picture, should turn aside to praise the frame.

Or let us look to the landscape painters of this school, carrying out the "one and only principle of absolute and uncompromising truth obtained by working everything, down to the minutest detail, from nature and from nature only." From such a principle, what is the result? certainly not art, but merely topographic truth. As well might the poet, from some hill-top, catalogue the

meadows and cornfields, the hedgerows, the villages, mansions, and churches he sees before him, and call it poetry.

When a great living artist was asked by a lady who was admiring one of his landscapes, where the scene was, he replied, "Madam, I am a landscape painter and not a topographer;" and this defines the difference between the art of landscape painting, as practised by the great masters, and as practised by the realistic school which arose out of what is called pre-Raphaelism. Rather than criticise the works of the living, let us take the picture of "Jerusalem and the Valley of Jehoshaphat," by Seddon, (National Gallery, No. 565), as a type of the class. It is painted by one who travelled far and endured much to produce it, and is worthy of our admiration for its fidelity, if we cannot render it for the art it displays. The "Jerusalem" is highly interesting; but merely for its topographic truth. It is a photograph with colour, containing every even the minutest detail of the scene: the walls of Jerusalem seem piled up stone by stone; outside are the few scant houses of the village suburb with their narrow openings to shut out the eastern sun; square in form and with flat roofs, they look like blocks of stone which have rolled down from the arid hills behind, so similar are they in colour to the rocks themselves. There, feeding on the scant herbage of thistle and teazle painted as if from a *hortus-siccus*, are the sheep and the goats together; the shepherd, meanwhile, his long gun beside him, lying under a flowering pomegranate. The little patches of soil on the sides of the valley kept up by walls of stone; the olive and fig trees, each given by number so

that the owner of each might recognize his own tree, his own patch of arid earth. The deep blue heaven of unclouded noon is above, the all-penetrating glare below. Jerusalem is before you—Jerusalem as it is—as it may be registered, mapped, and catalogued; but the poetry of Jerusalem is not there: it must come, if at all, from our own hearts and not from the picture. The sheep and the goats feeding together may suggest the great day when the angel of the Lord shall come and divide, setting the one on His right hand, the other on His left; the flat house-tops in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, His command that on that day they who are on the house-tops shall not go down to find their clothes: but all these suggestions are from within. This is, and is not, the Jerusalem that He wept over: this is, and is not, the valley of decision, wherein the multitudes shall be gathered on that day: it suggests nothing to us but a barren valley, a hill fortress, a place of stones.

It is true we are told of the pre-Raphaelites that "as landscape painters, the principal of that division of them who do not trust to imagination, must, in great part, confine themselves to mere foreground-work; they have been born with comparatively little enjoyment of those evanescent effects and distant sublimities which nothing but the memory can arrest, and nothing but a daring conventionalism portray." Rather disparaging admissions if true. But it is also said "for this work they are not needed; Turner, the first and greatest of the pre-Raphaelites, has done it already." Turner a pre-Raphaelite! Turner, who passed his life in studying nature under her varied aspects that his memory of her might be sure; who left us thousands of his studies, yet

repudiated the practice of painting *his pictures* at all out of doors, and would have laughed at the "one principle, the uncompromising truth of working everything from nature and from nature only, painting to the last touch in the open air from the thing itself." Turner a pre-Raphaelite! he who repudiated topographic imitation when it had served his purpose, and made selection of the beautiful and characteristic in Nature his principle; idealizing the commonplace of every-day Nature, which the laborious idler, painting from "the thing itself," can never do; and adding to it, from the ample stores of his well-filled memory, every evanescent beauty arising from sun and shade, and the thousand changes with which they glorify the common aspect of things!

Let them study Nature as he studied it. Let us see them, like him, multiply sketches of her ever-varying face, and then they will not need the tedious labour of rendering her leaf by leaf and blade by blade. But if Turner had been a pre-Raphaelite, let us imagine how he would have painted Jerusalem, "the city of the Great King," had he undertaken to realize it on canvas. Let us notice his treatment of Venice, as an instance in point. We many of us know the actual prose aspect of that city of waters; most of us may have seen the aspect realized, the buildings ruled out with precision, the canals with their regular wavelets as painted by Canaletti; but Turner, despising this matter-of-fact view of the city of the sea, realizes to us rather what the poet saw.

> "The fair city of the heart,
> Rising like water-columns from the sea,
> Of joy the sojourn, and of wealth the mart."

He lighted up her palaces and towers into jewelled rich-

ness with the bright rays of an Italian sun, filled her courts with pageants, her canals with rich argosies, her wharves with gondolas draped with broideries of pearl and gold. Had he treated Jerusalem, would he not by his art have clothed her with some of the glories promised to her by the sacred poet? "I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and thy foundations with sapphires, and I will make thy windows with agates and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders with precious stones" —some such glorious city has he made of Venice. And such, but far more glorious, we long to picture Jerusalem.

Let us pause, however; lest, in objecting to the principles they propounded, or which were propounded for them, we are thought to depreciate the men who held them. Be this far from us. Some of the followers of this school have attained, and are universally allowed to have attained, the first rank in art; and have painted pictures which all true lovers of art must admire. Some have avowedly repudiated the early principles of the brotherhood; and all who have gained eminence have more or less ignored them. We are also willing to admit that the principles themselves have a value, if not observed to the exclusion of others, in enforcing constant reference to Nature and greater imitative truth.

At present, the rigid carrying out of the "one principle," obtains more among the landscape, than the figure painters. We have still those who affect to paint cities house by house, window by window, chimney by chimney, and who sit whole summers idly photographing Alpine valleys field by field, and tree by tree. Men who have even the modesty to assure us that all the landscapes painted prior to their own advent—not even

excluding the works of Turner—if preserved at all, will only be so as curious specimens of what in ignorance was aforetime called art, and in order to compare them with the wonderful works of the painters of the future. We may well be amused with such conceit, as we are well convinced that painting landscapes "to the last touch direct from Nature," will not produce noble but rather mean art; and that, however useful at the beginning of an artist's career this mode of studying Nature may be, it will be dropped by the true artist as soon as he arrives at greater power, and realizes to himself that true art is the *poetic* representation of common Nature.

On the whole, we feel that the future prospects of art will be improved rather than injured by the outbreak of what has been idly called "the new heresy." The careful painting which it enforces, and the zeal and earnestness of its followers, serve to counterbalance another and more pressing evil which threatens the future progress of good art. This arises from the large demand for showy pictures of a low class, and at a low price, which has arisen from the formation of Art-unions, now in operation throughout the length and breadth of the land: pictures that are painted with no desire of improvement—no end but to sell—which embody all the meretricious qualities, all the showy artifices, that pre-Raphaelitism protested against: pictures that are manufactured almost by recipe, and which, as shown in our review of the British Institution, fill our exhibitions to the exclusion of less successful efforts after better things. To show the quantities in which such works are produced, we were assured, by one who counted them, that a single family of landscape painters, who exhibit under

various names, had in the several metropolitan exhibitions of a single season, more than 140 pictures; all painted up to an average showy standard, yet good enough to prove that, if guided by better aims, the painters had sufficient talent to produce works of true art, rather than remain mere manufacturers of pictures. This effect of art-unions is attributable to their very nature. The best interests of such societies consist in pleasing the largest number of their members, in distributing many small prizes rather than one or two good pictures: in fact, fostering mediocrity rather than excellence. Such being necessarily the case, we cannot look upon art-unions as contributing to art progress.

Another source of danger to art arises out of its very prosperity. We have glanced at this in relating the high prices realized by Turner's works; and it is confirmed by the action of the Government in largely increasing the payments to those artists who were commissioned to paint on the walls of the Senate House; grounding their decision on the largely increased sums other artists are paid for their works since the time those commissions were first given. Rumours are also abroad from time to time—perhaps exaggerated, yet with a large amount of truth—of the sums paid to living artists for commissioned pictures; besides the high prices, doubled within the last fifteen years, that pictures of merit realize at Christie's and other public sales. There is, no doubt, a great increase of the material wealth of the nation. War has for a time ceased from our borders; and science, aided by improved machinery, and supported by abundant capital, has enormously enriched our manufacturers; who—unlike our nobles with large estates,

family encumbrances and numerous dependents—have but to spend or re-invest their gains. Art affords both these opportunities; it gives pleasure and delight in possession, and rising prices show that the best art is a safe investment. But how obtain the best art? Want of knowledge on the part of the purchasers has raised up a class of middlemen and dealers; these again add largely to prices for their necessary profits. It would be wrong to say that many of this new class of purchasers were not genuine lovers of art, nor that those who began with small knowledge or appreciation, have not learnt by possession of fine works to love art for its own sake.

Still, with the many, art is no more than a source of self-glorification in possession, and a safe and improving investment for the future. Meanwhile, it is to be feared lest this very prosperity, these increasing prices, this eagerness for the works of painters whose pictures are in demand, should beget in the artists themselves the spirit of covetousness. It is right that artists should be paid at least as well as other professors who require no higher endowments, no longer previous study nor harder probation ere reputation is achieved, than those who, if they are true artists, must also be favoured with natural gifts. But art must be practised for the love of it, and not for gain, if art is to make true progress. The artist should love his labour, and no work should leave his easel that is not the best he can make it. This is hard, with dealers and purchasers waiting, money in hand, hungry for possession, and caring little for subject or for excellence, so that they get an undoubted work of a favourite painter: hard for him to resist the temptation of ready profit, though perhaps indifferently satisfied with

the success of his own labours; and thus the very prosperity of artists is a source of danger to true art progress. There are other causes that may affect the future of art, either for its prosperity or decay. We have shown its progress, during a century, from small beginnings until it is almost co-extensive with society. Some knowledge of it has spread among all educated classes, the Government taking in hand, as we have shown, to instruct the artisans, and even their children, in its rudiments.

At the beginning of our history, one exhibition of modern works was a novelty; now, all classes have opportunity of seeing not only modern pictures, but the noblest works of art. The National Gallery opens its treasures, not to the rich alone, but freely to the poor; Hampton Court is the resort of the poor man on his holidays; South Kensington in his leisure hours. In the great International Exhibition, means were afforded for the multitude to see and enjoy the best modern art of all countries. Illustrated works teem from the press, at prices within the reach of all; and it is a proof that the workman has learnt to love art, since it has been thought a good speculation to surround the walls of Canterbury Hall with pictures of merit, which the workman can enjoy as he takes his refreshment with his fellows at this resort for fellowship and amusement. During the latter part of our century, hopes have been realized which were the life-long dreams of our predecessors. Our early academicians offered to devote to them their unpaid labours. Barry struggled through life in an endeavour to realize them. Haydon saw these hopes at the point of realization, and died. Under the wise control of our great Prince Consort, and with all

the support, all the encouragement his countenance could give, the Government of the country has endeavoured to promote monumental art in the decoration of our public buildings. Our churches even have opened their doors to the painter, and works have been produced that may well vie with anything that has been done in modern times in other lands. But, alas! we have lost the presiding spirit; and it is doubtful whether the country has appreciated what has been done, or is inclined to promote its continuance. Even while we write art has sustained another loss, and in the death of Sir Charles Eastlake, this great art-movement another able supporter. His art-knowledge smoothed away many early difficulties; he ably seconded his princely master; and by his temper, tact, and judgment reconciled many differences. It remains to be seen whether this step in art-progress will be continued.

As our Century of Painters draws to its close, the Royal Academy also approaches its hundredth anniversary. The changes that have taken place in the general aspect of art, many of them the result of its influence and teaching, have necessarily had their re-action. The walls of the Academy have become far too limited for the demands upon its exhibiting space: its honours are thought to be confined to too few. Not undesirous of adapting itself to the altered circumstances of the time, its members were prepared, and have themselves proposed, extension of space and liberal changes in their constitution. Yet such changes must be accompanied with misgivings: doubts whether they will be wholly beneficial for art. Extending the exhibiting space may lead to increasing the mediocrity rather than the excellence of

the annual collections; to causing works of the greatest ability to be withheld lest they should be smothered in a mass of merely respectable art. Besides this, to extend the honours of the Academy is in reality to render them less honourable, less to be coveted; while giving the elections a wider constituency may result in the end in less purity of choice.

Meanwhile, the Academy has notice that the rooms it has long held, as an equivalent to those originally allotted in the palace of the Sovereign, are wanted for other more purely national purposes. With a new President, in new rooms, and with an amended constitution, we may expect that the new century of the Academy's existence will be in harmony with the best interests of art; we have only to hope that, whatever changes may be made, the members will maintain their full and complete independence, while they make every effort to remove just causes of complaint, and to take their true place as guardians of the interests of art and artists. We have enumerated these cautions and fears as to the future, but our faith is yet strong in the progress of art; we know that the English School has much to achieve, and we do not believe in our brethren flagging in the race. The talent rising up to succeed that which is passing away is abundant; and, if with a difference, is it not desirable that it should be so? All originality consists in a difference, and as the self-reliance of the young is tempered with the wisdom of years, British artists will continue to produce works worthy of record in a future century of painters of the English School.

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London: Printed by Smith, Elder and Co., Old Bailey, E.C.

PREPARING FOR THE PRESS

A DICTIONARY OF ARTISTS

OF

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WITH

NOTICES OF THEIR LIVES AND WORKS.

BY

SAMUEL REDGRAVE.

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Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018